

*Those (God) foreknew God also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that (Jesus) might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. Romans 8:29*

Lent 2020

Dear Friends,

There are the Four Exercises that Build and Sustain a Personal Relationship with Jesus: Getting to Know Jesus and Listening to Him, Walking and Talking to Jesus, Drawing Strength from Jesus to Love the Right Way and Looking in the Mirror with Jesus. We recently walked through these four steps with a desire to renew our personal relationship with Jesus.

One of the reasons we are attracted to Jesus is because we catch sight of our “best self” in him. Getting to know Jesus, walking and talking with him, drawing strength from him, we see more and more clearly the kind of human being we were created to be. At the time of his coming humanity had completely lost sight of this. It is so easy to do so in the midst of the allurements life places around us and the demands life makes upon us. God became human in Jesus to give us, in Jesus, a clear picture of all we were meant to be. The Bible says:

***“In his light we see the light.” Psalm 36:9***

It is Lent. Focus your attention on your course. Examine yourself in the light of Christ, and identify where your attitude, words and actions differ from the attitude, words and actions of Jesus. Identify one or two things you need to change in order to grow more like him. Make Lent “real” for yourself. This is not an exercise in guilt. The greatest joy and most intimate duty of a deep personal relationship is to want your friend to catch sight of his or her best self in you and to want to bring out the best in your friend. This is exactly what Jesus wants for you. He said,

*I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain... John 15:15-16*

Jesus doesn't stand in front of you as your judge, he stands next to you, just as he walks next to you, as your model, your trusted mentor and your coach. For centuries the Church has encouraged its members to set aside time to examine themselves and to hold themselves accountable to Jesus, our Savior. Saint Paul writes the Corinthian Christians:

*Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? 2 Corinthians 1*

This is what Lent is about. If you are uncertain as to how “to do” Lent, you will find copies of a booklet called *Lent, Holy Week and Easter* available near the entrances to the Church. It gives background and very practical advice as to how to proceed. Enclosed also find a full description of the other opportunities we are offering here at Saint Thomas Parish during the Lenten Season. You will also find a list of times for Confession and the services of Holy Week.