

Why 40 Days?

Forty days was chosen as the time of preparation because it was symbolic of the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness before embarking on His public ministry: "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights."

At the Council of Nicea in 325, the bishops were already talking about the "40 days of Lent." By the end of the fourth century, Pope Saint Leo was teaching that the faithful must "fulfill with their fasts the apostolic institution of the 40 days." Also the Israelites wandered in the desert 40 years before entering the Promised Land.

All-You-Can Eat Dinner

Catholic Charities of Delaware, Otsego, and Schoharie Counties will host their annual All-You-Can-Eat Pasta Dinner fund raiser on Wednesday, March 11, 5-8 pm at the Holiday Inn in Oneonta. Dinner consists of a buffet table of assorted pastas, different sauces, dessert, and beverage. Adults: \$10, children 5-12: \$5, and under 5--**free**. Tickets~ Teresa O'Leary, 865.5345, or George Mack, 865.5326.

Catholic Charities is committed to active witness on behalf of the Spiritual values of mercy and justice, recognize human needs at all stages of life and responds to all persons, with special emphasis on the economically poor and the vulnerable.

Marriage Moments by Susan Vogt

Remember your marriage vows and why you chose to love your spouse forever? Such commitment and self-sacrifice are indeed a spiritual undertaking and cannot be done alone. May God, who is love, support you.

Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Jesus chased the merchants out of the temple; it does not say He was angry. Jesus teaches us to act from conviction and not from anger. He did not condemn the merchants, only their business practice. Attack the behavior and not the person.

"Lent is like a long 'retreat' during which we can turn back into ourselves and listen to the voice of God, in order to defeat the temptations of the Evil One. It is a period of spiritual 'combat' which we must experience alongside Jesus, not with pride and presumption, but using the arms of faith: prayer, listening to the word of God, and penance. In this way we will be able to celebrate Easter in truth, ready to renew the promises of our baptism." ~ Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

Rice Bowl Country Spotlight

~ Niger ~

Life here is ruled by the seasons -- the dry season: the hot season, the rainy season, and the hungry season. In the hungry season (food supplies run out, prices rise), poor families face the difficult choice between feeding their children and basic needs. Habibou Alassane, his wife and nine children are farmers. Usually Habibou had to leave and travel often far away to find work during the hungry season. This year, for the first time in 15, he does not have to travel. A CRS project hired Habibou and others to dig reservoirs providing income and water for crops and livestock.

- Niger was ranked last out of 187 with 71% of the population living below the poverty line.
- Home to 16 million people, the government had projected that nearly half of the population suffered food insecurity last year because of extreme weather patterns.
- 90% of the people depend on rain-fed, traditional crop production for their livelihoods. CRS distributed seeds to 4,176 households in 2014.

The Scrutinies

This and the next two weeks we celebrate the Scrutinies. Their purpose is "to uncover" then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect; to bring out, then strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good." While specifically for those who are entering the Church, all of us can benefit from the Scrutinies by examining our hearts and consciences for healing and strengthening.