

## Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

The Gospel speaks of **light** and **darkness**. Often a parent is deliberately “left in the dark.” Darkness can be comforting for it makes no demands on us. Light can be disturbing for it forces us to take action. Parents walk a delicate balance of when to “sit in the dark” and when to “turn on the lights.”

## Rice Bowl Country Spotlight

~ Lebanon ~

Before civil war broke out in 2011, five year old Tanious Issa and his parents lived a good life in Syria. In that year the family house burned down, and they lost everything. Like so many of their neighbors, they made the difficult choice to leave and move to Lebanon.

Tanious loves living there because all he remembers about Syria is the sound of constant gunfire. Refugee life is tough: Tanious’ father can’t find a job, money is a struggle to pay rent and purchase food.

Catholic Relief Services is working hard to help the children like Tanious enjoy childhood: supporting schools where they can learn and play and where there are counselors who help them work through their trauma. Most important they find friends with whom to grow and share. CRS food vouchers help meet the family’s immediate needs.

- The civil war in Syria has killed more than 100,000 people in the past four years.
- Nearly three million Syrians have fled their country -- half are children.
- CRS is providing lifesaving assistance to 150,000 Syrian refugees across the Middle East.

*Renounce yourself in order to follow Christ;  
discipline your body; do not pamper yourself;  
but love fasting.*

~ Saint Benedict

## A Holistic Approach to Lent

*Fasting* ~ Use your fasting, not to impress God with your discomfort but to feed on the gift for which you hunger most. Let your fasting serve the lives of others as well as your own. It does little good to give up dessert but then to grumble at your children’s need for attention. Fast from some of your private pursuits to become food for your family and friends. Fast from anger, blame, and entitlement; feast on forgiveness, affirmation, and common good.

## Parenting Pointers by Susan Vogt

Single parents do double duty. It is hard, but it is not impossible. Your children will eventually appreciate your sacrifices. If you are not a single parent, find one and give them a break.

## Tools for Caregivers

On Saturday, April 18, the Capital Region Caregiver Coalition and Albany Guardian Society along with local Agencies on Aging are proud to present the eighth annual “Tools for Caregivers: Resources You Can Use When a Senior Relies on You.” Workshops, continental breakfast, caregiver healing touch, and a vendor resource fair will be offered. Location: Grace Fellowship, 20 Delatour Road in Watervliet from 8 am to noon. Call Vicki, 518.382.8481 ext. 1008, to register.

## Fast & Abstinence

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast and abstinence. As a sign of our penance, we preserve for the Diocese of Albany the custom of abstinence from meat on the Fridays of Lent. Abstinence binds all Catholics who are 14 years of age and older. Fasting binds all Catholics who are 18 years of age but not yet 59. Fasting refers to the quantity of food eaten. Traditionally, fasting calls for only one full meal per day. These are expressions of our desire to be converted in our hearts, to be reconciled with each other, and to love our neighbor.