

Lenten Almsgiving

by Rev. Larry Rice, CSP

During Lent, Catholics prepare for the celebration of Easter by observing a penitential season of repentance, renewal, and on-going conversion. Lent calls us back to the basics of our faith, acknowledging that we are all sinners, all in need of God's grace. Traditionally, Lent has been a time of renewed prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Of these three disciplines, almsgiving is probably the least well understood. After all, works of charity and giving to the poor are supposed to be part of how we live in every season. But, just as Lent asks more of our prayer, it also asks more of our generosity.

For many people, fasting and almsgiving are connected disciplines. The point of fasting, after all, isn't merely that we eat less, it could also mean that others can eat more, specifically those who live in poverty and hunger. One very popular Lenten almsgiving program is provided by Catholic Relief Services. It's called Operation Rice Bowl. The core of the program is a



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cardboard bowl. During Lent, we're encouraged to put our alms in the Rice Bowl. Seventy-five percent of the funds collected go to hunger relief programs around the world, and the remaining twentyfive percent stay in your local Catholic diocese to aid local hunger programs.

You can find information about Operation Rice Bowl and request materials for it by visiting the Catholic Relief Services website: orb.crs.org. They have resources for individuals, families, teachers and catechists, and for parishes.

However you choose to give to the poor this Lent, whether you're giving of your time, talent, or treasure, this season can be an important time of spiritual renewal. Part of how we're renewed is by acknowledging the many ways that God has blessed us and sharing those blessings with the poor and marginalized.

Father Rice is Vocations Director for the Paulist Fathers.



Tuesday, March 31

Chrism Mass 6:00 pm (Guardian Angel Cathedral)

Holy Thursday, April 2

Morning Prayer 8:00 AM

The Lord's Supper 7:00 PM followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (until midnight)

Good Friday, April 3

Morning Prayer 8:00 AM

Passion of the Lord 3:00 PM and 7:00 PM (Repeated)

Holy Saturday, April 4

Morning Prayer 8:00 am

(followed by Preparation Rites)

Blessing of Easter Foods 11:00 am

Holy Saturday Vigil (3 Hours) 7:30 pm

Easter Sunday Mass, April 5

6:00 am,

8:00 am (Church & Hall),

10:00 am (Church & Hall)

12 Noon (Church & Hall)

4:00 pm, 6:00 pm

Attendants in a “Field Hospital”

by Mary Ann Otto Director of Stewardship,
Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin

I believe one of the most enlightening comments Pope Francis has made thus far in his papacy is that the Church is a “field hospital” in the world. He believes our community of faith is called to “heal wounds” and to “warm the hearts of the faithful.” This is what Jesus modeled so well in the Gospels, and we are called to actively participate in his life and ministry here and now.

As a visual person, our Holy Father’s image conjures up for me images such as the story of the Good Samaritan, armed forces medical care units and the work of Blessed Mother Teresa. It also brings to mind early missionaries who brought Christianity to people around the globe. I find the idea of a “field hospital” attendant somewhat overwhelming. But being good stewards of the Gospel, we are called to stand with and to serve our brothers and sisters during some of the most difficult times in their lives. This is a tremendous challenge and yet a sacred honor.



Recently, I was selected to serve as a juror in a criminal case. It was my first experience and I found it an unsettling and emotional experience for me. The fears and tears of witnesses as well as the defendant brought a very human and vulnerable dimension to this legal process. Though the outcome of the trial was based on the evidence and testimony provided, for me, the face of Jesus was everywhere in the courtroom.

After the trial concluded, I wondered if any of those who participated in the trial were ministered to in some way by the “field hospital” workers in their respective parishes or worshipping communities. Was anyone visited, prayed for or given a compassionate ear and encouragement? I certainly hope so. There was so much opportunity here.

Until Jesus returns, our Church will always need to be a “field hospital.” I thank those who have special gifts of empathy, compassion, courage, and love, and use them to be Jesus in the world. And, I ask you to pray with me that we will all recognize where we are called to heal wounds and warm hearts so we can share the love of Christ and be a witness to the Good News.

God’s instructions, given by angels in dreams, and took the pregnant Mary into his home as his wife, protected her and Jesus at the child’s birth in Bethlehem through the family’s sojourn in Egypt, and provided for them as a carpenter in Nazareth. This feast, which was celebrated locally as early as the ninth century, became a universal feast in the fifteenth century, when it was placed on the liturgical calendar. Pope Pius IX named St. Joseph Patron of the Universal Church in 1870; he is also the patron saint of carpenters, the dying, and workers.



St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

First century

Solemnity—March
19

The spouse of
Mary the mother
of Jesus and the
legal father of

Jesus according to Jewish law, Joseph is a model of humility and obedience to God’s will. He followed