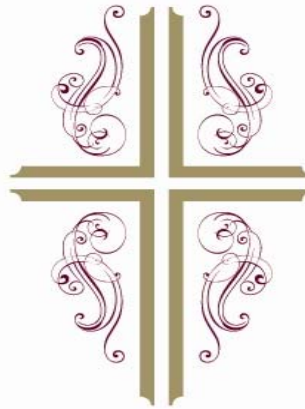


CARLOW UNIVERSITY  
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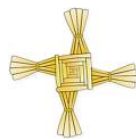
February 2010

Sister Cathy Solan, RSM  
Campus Minister  
3333 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

**THE FEAST OF ST. BRIGID OF KILDARE, IRELAND**

Dr. Maureen Crossen

On February 1 the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Brigid of Kildare, patroness of home and hearth. Her Feast day marks the ancient Irish first day of Spring: we can begin now to watch and listen for the signs! While many Irish (and others) anticipate and celebrate Great St. Patrick of Ireland in March, I always find myself welcoming this holy feast of Brigid, who with Patrick and Columcille, is considered Patron of Ireland. Brigid is also the patron of the hearth and home. She was also a foster mother for several scholars, who relied on her depth and wisdom.



Brigid had the ability to see Christ in everyone she met. If Christ were somehow lacking in the person, she could gently, but determinedly, call them to the truth of His love. Along with this gift, Brigid offered blessings on the most ordinary events and things. She blessed milk, the kitchen, the splashing of water on one's face in the wakening of the morning, and a blessing on the bed at night. In one of her most sincerely lighthearted meditations she anticipated seeing Christ and all the Saints assembled in heaven around a lake of beer! In her spirit, may our classrooms and offices be blessed places.

*A Prayer of Brigid—see page two*



Calendar



**Mass Schedule for February:**

2/2 (communion service), 2/9  
2/16 (Mardi Gras), 2/23 (Lent)

St. Brigid's Day, Monday,  
**February 1st.**

Groundhog Day, Tuesday,  
**February 2nd**

Feast of St. Blaise, Wednesday  
**February 3rd:** Prayer Service  
w/ Blessing of Throats at 12:30  
and 4:30 pm

**Ash Wednesday Prayer Services  
w/ distribution of Ashes:**  
12:30 and 4:30 pm

**Taizé Prayer Feb 17th, 7 pm**

**Stations of the Cross (Lent)**  
Each Friday during Lent @  
12:30 pm and 4:30 pm

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## A Prayer of Brigid



*Christ, in our coming and in our leaving,  
Christ, the Door and the Keeper;  
for us and our dear ones,  
this day and everyday,  
blessing for always.*

*May God who created all things  
be the guardian of this place  
and bring each one here peace.*

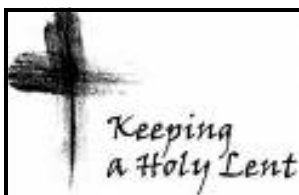
*May Christ's love be shared  
and His presence will be found here,  
and peace between all people.*

*May the Spirit bring lightness  
and laughter here.*

*May the Spirit be the strengthener  
and comforter  
in times of difficulty.  
May the Lord give peace  
but never complacency.*

*Here may encouragement be found  
and relationships strengthened.*

*For all who work here:  
May the joy and peace of heaven  
be with you and around you.  
The Lord bless you with great abundance.*



## LENT: PRAYER, FASTING AND ALMSGIVING

Lent is upon us once again, and the “regular” questions arise. “What must I do during Lent?”

The Roman Catholic Church’s “official” position concerning penance and abstinence during Lent can be found in the 1983 revision of the Code of Canon Law which also incorporated the changes made by Pope Paul VI. Following is a summary of those requirements:

**Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 are obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. In addition, all Catholics 14 years of age and older must abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all the Fridays of Lent.**

**Fasting**, broadly speaking, is the voluntary avoidance of something that is good. While Catholics talk about fasting, we normally mean restricting the food that we eat. We can fast between meals by not eating snacks or we can engage in a complete fast by abstaining from all food. While fasting takes the form of refraining from eating, it is primarily a spiritual discipline designed to tame the body so that we can concentrate on higher things.

The U.S. Bishops explain fasting as eating only one full meal. Some food is permitted at breakfast or midday depending on the time a person chooses to eat their main meal. It is important to remember, however, that one’s health must be taken into consideration when planning a Lenten fast.

There has always been some confusion regarding fasting and abstinence. While the use of meat is forbidden, eggs, milk products or condiments made of animal fat *are* permitted.

[Continued on page 5]

# Feast of St. Blaise

Wednesday, February 3rd

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

Blessing of Throats @ 12:30 and 4:30 p.m.

Many Catholics might remember St. Blaise's feast day because of the *Blessing of the Throats* that took place on this day. St. Blaise's protection of those with throat troubles apparently comes from a legend that a boy was brought to him who had a fishbone stuck in his throat. The boy was about to die when St. Blaise healed him. Although very few facts are known about St. Blaise, he was a Bishop of Sebastea in Armenia who was martyred under the reign of Licinius in the earth fourth century.

A legend of his life sprang up in the eighth century; he was born to a rich and noble family who raised him as a Christian. After becoming a Bishop a new persecution of Christians began. He received a message from God to go into the hills to escape persecution. People hunting in the mountains discovered Blaise in a cave surrounded by wild animals who were sick. Blaise walked among the animals curing their illnesses. Recognizing Blaise as a Bishop, the hunters captured him and took him back for trial.

Blaise is the patron saint of wild animals because of his care for them, and also of those with throat maladies. Find out what you can do to support and protect wildlife. Even a birdfeeder can help God's creatures survive. (Courtesy of Catholic Online.)

## *Prayer to St. Blaise*

*Bishop and Martyr; Patron of Healthy Throats*

O glorious Saint Blaise, who by your martyrdom did you leave to the Church a precious witness to the faith, obtain for us the grace to preserve within ourselves this divine gift, and to defend, without human respect, both by word and example, the truth of that same faith, which is attacked and slandered in these our times.

You who miraculously restored a little child when it was at the point of death by reason of an affliction of the throat, grant us your mighty protection in like misfortunes; and, above all, obtain for us the grace of Christ in mortification together with a faithful observance of the precepts of the Church, which may keep us from offending Almighty God. Amen.

**“A joyful heart is the health of the body, but a depressed spirit dries up the bones.”**

**Proverbs 17:22**



Join us for **Taizé Prayer**  
 February 17th and March 17th  
 7:00 pm, Campus Chapel  
 3rd floor, FWH

**COMING IN MARCH**  
**BUSY PERSON'S LENTEN**  
**RETREAT**

**MARCH 21—25**

**Look for more information on**  
**the Student Portal/Campus**  
**Ministry**

## *Stations of the Cross*

Each Friday during Lent  
 12:30 & 4:30 pm  
 Open to all!



From the earliest of days, followers of Jesus told the story of his passion, death and resurrection. When pilgrims came to see Jerusalem, they were anxious to see the sites where Jesus was. These sites became important holy connections with Jesus. Eventually, following in the footsteps of the Lord, along the way of the cross, became a part of the pilgrimage visit.

The stations, as we know them today, came about when it was no longer easy or even possible to visit the holy sites. In the 1500's villages all over Europe started creating "replicas" of the way of the cross, with small shrines commemorating the places along the route in Jerusalem. Eventually, these shrines became the set of 14 stations we now know and were placed in almost every Catholic Church in the world.

(courtesy of Creighton University:  
<http://www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/stations-prn.html>)

Making, or praying, the Stations is easy and can be as personal as you want it to be. Prayer guides will be available in the campus chapel throughout Lent. The stations are located on the wall to the left of the altar.

Remember, this is *prayer*; it is not an intellectual exercise. Try the stations and experience the consolation they offer. Pray them in the privacy of your home or room or in the chapel and be renewed in this intimate experience of Jesus' solidarity with all humanity.



## **Lenten Customs: Ashes and Giving Something Up**

Ash Wednesday liturgies and services are often the best attended services in the entire year. Some say this is out of a sense of "duty" while other say it is because it is free! However, according to the St. Anthony Messenger, Ashes are an ancient symbol of repentance [sackcloth and ashes.] They also remind us of our mortality [remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return]. It is easily linked to our Baptismal death and resurrection. To prepare well for death we must die to sin and rise up again to new life in Jesus Christ. Being marked with ashes at the beginning of Lent provides an outward symbol of our need for a deeper conversion during this season of renewal.

What about "Giving Up" for Lent? Many do not have a clear understanding of the purpose of "giving something up for Lent." It is an activity that is short-lived; give it up for 40 days and return to the old behavior on Easter. Lent, however, is about **conversion**. It is about turning our lives around and giving of ourselves completely to God. This always involves giving up sin in some form. Our goal should **not be just to abstain from a form of behavior for the 40 days of Lent but to root out this behavior forever**. Conversion means leaving behind an old way of living and embracing a new life in Christ.



## LENT: PRAYER, FASTING AND ALMSGIVING

[Continued from page 2.]

Remember that abstinence does NOT include meat juices and liquid foods made from meat. Chicken broth, consommé, soups cooked or flavored with meat, meat gravies or sauces are not forbidden. And remember, no one considers Jell-O to be meat. If in doubt whether a particular food is considered meat, Father John Huels, in his book *The Pastoral Companion*, relies on a norm long used by moral theologians: if in doubt whether a particular food is considered meat, look to the custom. Custom is the best interpreter of the law.

When the U.S. Bishops publish the annual Lenten requirements, they quote the teaching of the Holy Father concerning the seriousness of observing these days of penance: the obligation to do penance is a serious one.

As stated previously, fasting is primarily a spiritual discipline. That is why fasting is usually mentioned along with **prayer** and **almsgiving (or charity)**. By fasting we free our souls for prayer. We also free up food or money that we can give to those in need [donating that \$1 rather than purchasing the Sarris candy bar!] Giving more time to prayer during Lent should draw us closer to God. Almsgiving is a sign of our care for those in need and an expression of our gratitude for all that God has given to use. This also includes works of charity and justice.

The three spiritual disciplines — Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving — go hand in hand. We are called each Lent to practice them together.

### Going beyond what is required of us...

These 40 days before the celebration of Easter are a preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Church encourages us to individually observe a stricter fast [prayer, fasting, almsgiving]. However, common sense and caution should be the rule. No one should embark on any type of penance or spiritual discipline that can be physically or psychologically harmful.



### *Holy Week & Easter*

Check out the services offered during Holy Week and Easter at your local faith community. Not sure where to go? Contact Sister Cathy in the Campus Ministry Office.

Sunday, March 28th...Palm Sunday  
 Thursday, April 1st...Holy Thursday  
 Friday, April 2nd...Good Friday  
 Saturday, April 3rd...Easter Vigil  
 Sunday, April 4th...Easter!

