Pastor’s Corner

My brothers and sisters,

This Wednesday, we begin the Season of Lent. Holy Day of Obligation or not (it’s not), the Catholic Community of Pleasanton’s churches will be packed. This is a good thing. Perhaps the heart and spirit understands better than the head because more people go to church on Ash Wednesday than on any other day of the year, including Christmas. There’s something about those ashes and their imaginative meaning.

My brothers and sisters, ashes are gritty, primal, emblematic and speak the language of the soul. Something inside each of us knows exactly why we take the ashes. We know who and whose we are. If we are able to accept that, then we know we are dust. Ashes are dust and dust is soil, humus; humanity and humility come from that root. Ashes have always been a major symbol within many religions. To put on ashes, to sit in ashes, is to say publicly and to ourselves that we are reflecting on the caliber of life. There is some important work going on silently inside of you and me. We need to pause and take note. This is no longer “Ordinary Time”. For many of us, this is not comfortable – to deal with the quiet of this time, to face the “real” reality of sin and death. This is not a time and season for celebration. Yet, we want to go to church to be uplifted and to find happiness. We are a Church of resurrection and love, after all. If you want NOT to walk this truth, you are free to bypass reality.

It is by dealing with the truth of the dust that we find real and true happiness. There, life emerges. That being said, some of us will wipe those ashes

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off as soon as we leave church; others will wear those ashes like a badge of honor, never wanting to leave the dust. Between those two extremities are as many experiences of ashes as those who receive the dust. We are all dealing with dust differently depending upon where we find ourselves. Each and every one of us at The Catholic Community of Pleasanton is finding his or her way. We are getting “real” with the dust.

Such is the case in my own life. I have encountered the ashes at different “times and seasons” in my own life. When I was at the Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland – I was focused more on solidarity with those who visited us seeking health care and legal assistance. It was a very eye-opening reality, day in and day out. The levels of accompaniment that were required seemed overwhelming at times. In the end, the ashes were a mark of solidarity with the lived reality of these men, women and children.

Last Ash Wednesday, I was not with you in Pleasanton. I was given the “time and season” to sit in the dust of my own life that had been burned and reduced to ashes. The dust was a gift. It was as if truth was emerging from the burning timbers of my own doing—certain dreams, a sense of power over my life and a sense of my own goodness and adequacy. That was where God asked me to sit in the dust. This year, God is taking me to the dust that will be signed on my forehead. He's going to want me to let the dust stay with me; he wants me to be with the dust. There I will sit in the dust differently than before. What does that means this year? I cannot tell you. Like past years, this is to be revealed. I just need to trust the dust.

This Ash Wednesday, weather you worship at St. Augustine or St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, take time to let God direct you to sit in the dust of the ashes. Don’t be too quick to wash away who you are. Realize that everyone around you is experiencing what you are, and differently. We are all on the same journey and each of us is living it differently. We need to respect that and support each other through these 40 days of dust.

When we do this well and take our time, out of the dust will come the celebration and resurrection.

Let’s be Lent...

Fr. Paul
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Mass Intentions</th>
<th>Calendar of Events</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MONDAY</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>Richard Del Tredici</td>
<td>8:00 AM Rosary</td>
<td>Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>TUESDAY</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>Ellen &amp; George Fitzgerald</td>
<td>8:00 AM Rosary, 10:00 AM Toddler Playgroup, 12:00 PM Al-Anon Meeting, 7:00 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>Church, Room 13, Room 8, Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEDNESDAY</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>Ash Wednesday For the People</td>
<td>8:00 AM Rosary</td>
<td>Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>THURSDAY</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>Eleanor &amp; Edward Collins</td>
<td>8:00 AM Rosary, 7:30 PM Bible Study</td>
<td>Church, Rms. 16 &amp; 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRIDAY</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>Mary Jane Nash</td>
<td>8:00 AM Rosary, 9:30 AM Bible Study, 11:00 AM Al-Anon Meeting, 6:00 PM Stations of the Cross: Spanish, 6:00 PM AA - Words of Wisdom, 6:00 PM Hispanic Prayer Group, 7:30 PM Stations of the Cross: English</td>
<td>Church, Rms. 16 &amp; 17, Room 8, Rms. 4 &amp; 5, Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>SATURDAY</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>Cynthia Irene Gibson Paul Fitzgerald</td>
<td>8:00 AM Rosary, 8:45 AM Al-Anon, 3:00 PM Individual Reconciliation</td>
<td>Church, Room 8, Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUNDAY</td>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
<td>Tom Northam Luis &amp; Augustina Cortez</td>
<td>10:00 AM Children’s Liturgy of the Word</td>
<td>Room 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUNDAY</td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Dick &amp; Elsie Palin Inbae Antonio Kim  Caridad Bonaobra Martin Family</td>
<td>9:00 AM Children’s Liturgy of the Word, 10:15 AM RCIA—Inquiry, 10:15 AM M.O.M.S. Bible Study, 11:00 AM Children’s Liturgy of the Word</td>
<td>Chapel, Room A, Room B, Chapel</td>
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<tr>
<td>MONDAY</td>
<td>12:10 PM</td>
<td>Eustaquio Mesina</td>
<td>11:30AM Rosary and Angelus, 12:45 PM Eucharistic Adoration, 7:15 PM RCIA</td>
<td>Chapel, Chapel, Chapel</td>
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<tr>
<td>TUESDAY</td>
<td>12:10 PM</td>
<td>Jerome Miick</td>
<td>11:30AM Rosary and Angelus</td>
<td>Chapel</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEDNESDAY</td>
<td>12:10 PM</td>
<td>Ash Wednesday For the People</td>
<td>11:30AM Rosary and Angelus, 12:45 PM Eucharistic Adoration, 5:00 PM Children’s Choir Rehearsal, 5:30 PM Legion of Mary</td>
<td>Chapel, Chapel, Church, Room B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THURSDAY</td>
<td>12:10 PM</td>
<td>Ji Jung &amp; Julianna Lim</td>
<td>11:30AM Rosary and Angelus, 7:00 PM Cantor Rehearsal, 7:30 PM Grief Ministry Team Meeting</td>
<td>Chapel, Church, Chapel</td>
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<td>FRIDAY</td>
<td>12:10 PM</td>
<td>Margurite Hamilton</td>
<td>11:30AM Rosary and Angelus, 6:00 PM Italian Catholic Federation Meeting</td>
<td>Chapel, Room A</td>
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<tr>
<td>SATURDAY</td>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
<td>Lenten Morning of Reflection with Fr. Chris</td>
<td>10:00 AM Children’s Liturgy of the Word</td>
<td>Chapel</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUNDAY</td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Anna Marie Dumlao (L) Gloria Salazar Josefa Domingo For the People</td>
<td>9:00 AM Children’s Liturgy of the Word, 10:15 AM RCIA—Inquiry, 11:00 AM Children’s Liturgy of the Word</td>
<td>Chapel, Room A, Chapel</td>
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Scripture Readings
February 18
Genesis 9:8-15
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:12-15

Ash Wednesday Masses
February 14
St. Augustine Church
8:30 AM and 7:30 PM
St. Elizabeth Seton
12:10 PM and 6:00 PM

Ashes are distributed only during Masses.

Ash Wednesday & Good Friday
Ash Wednesday & Good Friday are days of fast and abstinence (one full meal, two lesser meals, no meat, no eating between meals). The law on fasting obliges all persons who are between the ages of 18 and 59 and not restricted by diet for health reasons. All Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence (no meat or meat products).

Regarding the obligatory days listed above, however, there are frequent questions about the degree of seriousness of the matter. The teaching of Pope Paul VI may be simply paraphrased: "The obligation to observe, as a whole or 'substantially', the penitential days specified by the Church is serious. But no one should be scrupulous in this regard: failure to observe individual days of penance is not considered serious, rather it is the failure to observe any penitential days at all or a substantial number of such days which must be considered serious."

Dress-A-Girl Around The World
Our next Sew-Fest is February 17, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM at St. Michael Hall, 325 Maple Street, Livermore. We need help sewing, ironing, cutting; bring your sewing machine or serger, iron, ironing board, scissors along with your helping hands and we will put you to work! You can come for as long as you want--an hour or all day! Please bring a bag lunch if you plan to stay all day! We are always accepting cheerful cotton fabric donations! If you can't make the Sew-Fest but would like to sew, please contact us for kits that you can sew from home. Questions? Suzanne Beck, (925) 352-8447 or suzbeck@yahoo.com.

Young Adult Ministry
College students and young professionals are welcome! Find us on Facebook under Tri-Valley Catholic Young Adult Ministry, where all our events are posted in a timely manner or visit the CCOP website. Join us Sunday, February 18 at St. Augustine at 10:00 AM. Pray together at Mass and join us for fellowship at brunch afterward!

Little Black Books For Lent
Daily Reflection Books for Lent are available for only $1 each in the vestibule after Mass this weekend. These Little Black Books provide an excellent way to spend a few minutes in prayer and reflection each day during Lent. Books are available in English and Spanish and large print in English. Purchase a book today, use it daily in Lent and prepare to celebrate the joy of Christ's resurrection at Easter.
Grief Ministry
The death of a loved one is a shattering experience. You do not have to suffer alone. We invite you to participate in our grief support where you can heal. We will be meeting February 22, March 8 and 22 at 7:30 PM at St. Elizabeth Seton. For more information, call Eleanor at (925) 846-8708. All are welcome regardless of religious affiliation.

Stations of the Cross
February 16 through March 23
Fridays at 7:30 PM
St. Augustine Church.
During Lent we have the opportunity to share traditionally the Cross of Christ, led by different ministries of CCOP.

- February 16
  Mary Mother of Church (Legion of Women)

- February 23
  Women in God's Spirit (WINGS)

- March 2
  St. Vincent de Paul

- March 9
  Italian Catholic Federation

- March 16
  SOWERS (Small Christian Community)

- March 23
  Knights of Columbus

Bingo Bash
Italian Catholic Federation Br. 285 Fundraiser
Saturday, March 3
St. Augustine Church
$10 per Bingo Packet (10 games)
Pizza, Snacks & Beverages available
Prizes & Raffles
Doors Open 6:00 PM –Bingo—6:30 PM
Reservation Required
Contact Christine at (925) 462-3704 by February 26.
Proceed benefit Children’s Hospital treatment of Cooley’s Anemia.

Lenten Small Groups
Sharing Faith, Fellowship & Fun
Would you like to enrich your Easter experience? Join a small group for reading and discussion during the 6-weeks of Lent. Meetings are held in group members’ homes once a week between mid-February and late March. Materials will be provided. Participants reflect on readings and share how passages relate to our everyday lives. Sign-up forms are available at www.catholicsofpleasanton.org. Contact Rosemary at (925)462-0867 or Sharon at (925) 462-8625.

40 Days For Life
From February 14 to March 25, our community will take part in 4 Days for Life. It requires peaceful conduct with no judgments and no offensive signs. It is not a demonstration to change laws. With the help of the Holy Spirit we will change hearts and perhaps offer a woman a last chance for help in a crisis pregnancy. Vigil Location: Outside Walnut Creek Planned Parenthood. Vigil Hours: 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM daily, except Sundays. Please sign up for an hour or more at any time during the campaign! For more information, go to 40daysforlife.com/walnutcreek or send an email to friendsforlifetrivalley@gmail.com.

Vacation Bible School
June 18 - June 22
Registration Opens In March
St. Augustine Church
Rice Bowls Will Be Available Next Week After All Masses

After Mass next week (February 17th and 18th) please pick up a Rice Bowl in the vestibules. Inside the bowl there is a calendar that can help bring your Lent to life. The Rice Bowl is a Catholic Relief Service (CRS) project. CRS advances human life around the world by directly meeting basic needs and advocating solutions to injustice. Please help by picking up your rice bowl and contributing throughout lent. The bowls will be collected after each Mass on April 7th and 8th 2018.

The Rice Bowl Project at CCOP is organized by the Social Justice and Outreach Committee.