

Dear Friends,

The St. Patrick's church memorabilia remains on display for a few more weeks. Please join me in thanking, through prayer, the many hands who contributed to this project.

The speaker for the Third Friday (in our Five Fridays series), March 29, will be our own Fr. Walt Wainwright. For nine years Fr. Wainwright served as pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary. He received senior priest status in 2010 and currently lives in Elmira, where he assists with weekday and weekend Masses at the parish of the Most Holy Name of Jesus. Just as Fr. MacNamara did with St. Vincent, Fr. Walt spoke frequently about his positive experiences in Painted Post. Little did I know when listening to both of them talk about their time here, I would one day succeed them. It will be a welcome return and a treat for us to hear Fr. Walt's words of wisdom. His topic is:

**“Walking with Jesus to Calvary”**

Again, I am grateful to so many people who have come together to make this series a special parish event. It's also gratifying to see so many, young and old, come together for prayer and fellowship. By the way, many of our young people who attended the first two Fridays found the recreation room in Rogers Hall and from the happy sounds of things were enjoying themselves. **All young people are welcome to attend!**

And now for some mid-Lenten catechesis....

Did you know....the total number of calendar days between the beginning of Lent (Ash Wednesday) and the Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil) is 46. But we know the Lenten season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving mirrors the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert, which fulfills the 40 years that Moses and the Israelites spent wandering the desert.

The Five Sundays of Lent and Palm Sunday are excluded from the Lenten fast because, like all Sundays, they are solemnity days that celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, thus making the Lenten observance 40 days, not 46. Now this past March 19th was the Solemnity of St. Joseph, the universal patron of the Church. On rare occasions, this feast can fall during Holy Week but never on a Sunday during Lent. Thus, this weekday solemnity is not included in the break from the personal discipline that we have committed to for the Lenten season.

These facts must be read and observed carefully when it comes to matters of discipline. The type of sacrifice we make for Lent depends on how we interpret the Sunday observance. For our own personal benefit, it may be a good idea to extend our penitential practice on Sundays as well. Any Lenten promise we make should draw us closer to God and should not be an act that draws attention to ourselves. If we resolved to give up chocolate, sweets, drink, etc. during Lent, then we can consider refraining from observing these individual promises on Sundays. However, if we resolved to amend our lives by ridding ourselves of bad habits, actions or behaviors, it would not make sense to return to those vices just because Sunday is a solemnity.

Whatever decision we make, let us make it carefully in prayer and free from judgement about the choices made by ourselves or others. In any case, I hope this helps our mid-Lenten pilgrimage that Deacon Jim so eloquently preached on last weekend. What a blessing he is for our parish.

In Christ, Fr. Jones