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**St Francis of Assisi, Parkview**

 **Diocese of Johannesburg**

**Anglican Church of Southern Africa**

**Celebration of Discipline**

**Lent to Easter 2017**

**The Franciscan Way**

“Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant gratification is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people.” With these words, Richard Foster opens his book, *Celebration Discipline,* which forms the basis of our Lenten program this year. The way forward, he argues, lies in the discovery and practice of the Classical Spiritual Disciplines. The Spiritual Disciplines, in one way or another, have been practiced since the times of the early church and have been written about and developed by the all great devotional writers of the church. They are central to a mature and deep Christian life.

 At the heart of Franciscan Spirituality lies the liberation from bondage that the practice of the Disciplines brings. Their purpose is to liberate us from the stifling slavery of self-interest, from the grasp of material superficiality, from the instincts of ingrained habits, to a deep and enduring freedom to love God and the world in which we live. St Francis’s acts of simplicity and love, his embrace of creation, flow naturally from his practise of the Spiritual Disciplines.

 So too it is with us. The more intentionally we practise the Spiritual Disciplines the greater freedom we will find to love, to live simply and to serve with our whole being.

The Lent Course this year has three major elements:

1. Sunday Services that explore a different Spiritual Discipline each week
2. Week Day Study Groups that develop the Sunday theme more fully
3. Sunday Acts of Corporate Transformation (or Sunday Fasts) that we practice together as a Franciscan community that complement each Sunday theme.

**New in 2017 - Corporate Acts of Transformation – Sunday Fasts**

For most of us the practice of Lent is a primarily individual process. “I’ll give up chocolate for Lent, or alcohol, and I will assist at an orphanage.” This year we would, in addition to your individual Lenten practices, like to introduce **Corporate Acts of Transformation**, in which together, as much as we can, **participate as a community in the same Lenten discipline each Sunday** in Lent. These **Sunday Fasts** are linked to the **Spiritual Discipline** that we explore each Sunday in Lent.

The purpose of these Sunday Fasts is to encourage a sense of community among us, to practice the Spiritual Disciplines together, and be transformed by these experiences so that we live more fully as God’s presence in our world.

We understand that not all of us will be able to participate equally in these Sunday Fasts. Walking barefoot, fasting from food for a day, and donating a pair of shoes will not be possible for all of us. To be a community of love is to accept that we seek not uniformity in practice but unity in purpose. And our purpose is to follow Christ on whatever path he leads us, both as individuals and as community. We will not create a new legalism. We will embrace and support and respect each other.

Sunday March 5. Lent 1. **Barefoot Sunday**

We will enter the church barefoot, if we can, and bring a pair of shoes to be placed the baskets at the entrance to the church, as we can. As much as is possible we spend the rest of the Sunday barefoot. The shoes will be taken for distribution to communities in need of shoes. The real need is for **men’s’ shoes**.

Sunday March 12. Lent 2. **Food Fast**

For those who can we fast from all food from sunrise to sunset. We drink only water through the day. At 5pm we gather for an informal Eucharist and then break the fast together with a simple bring and share meal. Lunch will be the main meal that will be missed. Use the time creatively as a family or group of friends. Estimate the amount of money saved and donate that or more to St Francis outreach programs. There will be no tea after church.

Sunday March 19. Lent 3. **Media Fast**

Spend an entire day without media?! For some, so easy; for others, so difficult. No screen time, no Sunday papers, no TV, no video games, no Facebook, no Snapchat. No catching up on work on tablet or PC. Wow! Instead pray and read the Bible or some inspirational book or magazine. Spend time together as a family and friends. Invite some people who might be alone over for lunch. Play board games or cards together. Don’t be distracted.

Sunday March 26. Lent 4. **Electricity Fast**

Sunday services without electricity – no organ but the piano. No PowerPoint but the Prayer Book and hymn book. Sundays at home without electricity. These by choice and not by Eskom. At least we know what to do, as Eskom has prepared us for this. We’ll have a **Parish Picnic** at Delta Park. We meet there at 11.30. Wonderful!

Sunday April 2. Lent 5. **Word Fast**

Silence. Prayer and Meditation. A Sunday service stripped to its bones. Rock’nRoll shrouded in silence except for only the most necessary of words. Silence before the service and after the service. A cup of tea in silence. Silence at home. Not all of us can manage this. But even if we do this for part of the day that will be great. Talk encouraged over meals. But thought-filled talk. Find alone time. Go for a walk. Be in nature. Do crafting. Sit under a tree. Count leaves. Watch ants. Pray. Study.

Sunday April 9. Palm Sunday. **Walk to Church**

 Let this Sunday be slow Sunday. Do things slowly, meditatively, intentionally. Be peaceful and without hurry. Walk to church. Some of us won’t be able to walk all the way. So, park at a friend’s house. Walk together. Enjoy the walk and each other’s company. Park on Dundalk Avenue. Or just a little further from church than you might otherwise. And as you walk remember that we will walk around the church waving palms and palm crosses making a joyful noise.

***May God take these Sunday Fasts and use them to transform our life together at St Francis.***

**Lent Study Groups**

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| **Day**  | **Time** | **Hosts** | **Leaders** |
| Monday | 18:30 | Cally Tuckey | Cally Tuckey and Sue Jordaan |
| Wednesday | 18:30 | Ann Pryor | Ann Pryor and Amanda van Reyneveld |
| Wednesday | 18:30 | Gilly Rice | Cynthia Botha and Patience Dlamini |
| Thursday  | 18:30 | Young Adults | Paul Germond and Yvette Angoma |
| Friday  | 10:00 | Church | Susan Alexander |
| Sunday  | 09:30 | Youth @ Church | Yvette Angoma |
| Sunday | 11:00 | Mothers’ Union | Patience Dlamini |
| Sunday  | 12:30 | Sarah and Sean Evans | Clementine Nishimwe and Tongai Furusa |

Sign-up sheets for these groups are at the back of the church.



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| **Date** | **Day** | **Theme** | **Transformative Action** |
| March 1 | Ash Wednesday | **The Meaning of Penitence** | **Imposition of Ashes** |
| March 49-11 am | Saturday Meditation | **Meditation on the Prayer of St Francis** | **Meditation** |
| March 5 | Lent 1 | The Inward Disciplines of **Prayer & Meditation** | **Barefoot Sunday** |
| March 12 | Lent 2 | The Inward Discipline of **Fasting** | **Food Fast** |
| March 19 | Lent 3 | The Inward Discipline of **Study** | **Media Fast** |
| March 26 | Lent 4 | The Outward Discipline of **Simplicity** | **Electricity Fast** |
| April 2 | Lent 5 | The Outward Discipline of **Solitude** | **Word Fast /Silence** |
| April 9 | Palm Sunday | The Outward Discipline of **Submission** | **Walk to Church****Palm Procession** |
| April 106:30 pm | Monday | Corporate Discipline of **Guidance**  | **Meditation** |
| April 116:30 pm | Tuesday | **Stations of the Cross with Eucharist** | **Stations** |
| April 126:30 pm | Wednesday | Corporate Discipline of **Worship – Taize Service** | **Worship** |
| April 136:30 pm | Maundy Thursday | Corporate Discipline of **Confession** | **Washing of Feet Barefoot Service** |
| April 149 & 12  | **Good Friday** | Corporate Discipline of **Confession** | **Veneration of the Cross** |
| April 166am 8:30 | **Easter Day** | Corporate Discipline of **Celebration** | **Celebration and Worship** |

**Saturday Meditation 8:30 – 9:30 am every Saturday in Lent**

**Except for March 4 which is from 9:00 – 11:00**