

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

February 19, 2010

Since you last read a letter from me, LENT has begun! It's possible that the Lent train left the station without you on Ash Wednesday- you may have been out of town, on vacation, not near a church - or you just plain forgot that it was Ash Wednesday! Not to worry - it's not too late to begin to live this season of preparation for Easter through prayer, fasting and caring for the poor. Lent is more an affair of the heart than of the calendar and the Lord is always pleased when any one of us turns towards him and seeks to grow in his grace and love.

At Mass today you were offered a simple Cross on a cord as a daily reminder of the season we've entered. For adults, there are the *Little Black Books* with a prayer plan for each day that should take about 6 minutes of your time. We also are offering containers for collecting Lenten sacrifices, perhaps the money you might have spent on food, drink or other pleasures you're giving up for Lent. This money will go directly to the St. Boniface Haiti Foundation and its work with the poor in Haiti.

You might already know that Conor Shapiro, a Concordian and former member of our parish, recently became the administrative director general of the St. Boniface Hospital in Fond des Blancs in Haiti. This past summer Conor married a woman he met in Haiti and they are expecting a child. Conor will be in Concord next weekend, February 27 and 28 and will speak at the end of all our weekend liturgies. I hope you'll be there to hear him and that his words will move you to fill those Lenten containers generously over the next 40 days.

At the 11:30 Mass last weekend we celebrated the rite of welcome for Steve Shirley who is preparing to enter into the full communion of the Catholic Church. Steve was baptized in his youth in the Methodist Church and now seeks communion with us. His wife, Kathleen, is his sponsor, ably assisted by their young son, Jack. Please pray for Steve as he prepares to make a statement of faith and to be confirmed and receive the Eucharist for the first time this Easter.

As you know from my letter last week and from ads you may have seen on television or heard on the radio, the Archdiocese of Boston is sponsoring an effort this Lent in which there will be a priest available for confessions in every church and chapel of the archdiocese on the Wednesday nights of Lent: February 24 and March 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31 from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Our parish will participate in this effort on those dates and at the prescribed hour. On most Wednesdays I will be the priest available for confession but a visiting priest will be here on March 10 and Fr. Medas will be here on March 24. (When I know the name of the visiting priest for March 10, I'll include it in my weekly letter.)

To assist in this effort, I've included in this bulletin an insert with a guide for celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As you'll see, it includes explanatory notes, a refresher on "what to say and do," and, on the reverse side, a guide for examining one's conscience prior to coming to the sacrament. This insert should be helpful to adults and high school students. A similar guide, suitable for younger children, is available at the church doors. In addition to these special times, confessions will also be heard at the regular time on Saturday afternoons from 4:00 - 4:30 p.m.

I have and will continue to post on my blog reflections I hope you'll find helpful for living the Lenten season. My blog is at [www.ConcordPastor.blogspot.com](http://www.ConcordPastor.blogspot.com). And you can find the parish calendar on the parish website at [www.HolyFamilyConcord.org](http://www.HolyFamilyConcord.org). Both of these addresses are always on the front cover of the parish bulletin.

Sincerely,  
Fr. Fleming