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CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 7

MARCH 2017

LENT!

Lent! The liturgical time of the year when we get back to basics! As a family, it is good to participate in praying, fasting, and giving alms together. Why?

Prayer: *We pray to let our relationship with God be healed and renewed*

Fasting: *We fast (as individuals and as a family) to allow healing within any areas of our life and in our family that might be broken. Those pieces that need renewal in our family life, God takes them and renews them through our fasting.*

Alms Giving/Service: *We give alms to heal our relationship with those around us through acts of charity to one another and alms giving.*

The children have learned that Lent, like Advent, is a time of preparation, penance and anticipation. It is important that we do not treat Lent as a time of punishment because it is not! It is about seeing in what areas of our lives we have wandered away from the Good Shepherd (Lk 15:3-6) or what blockages we have that are preventing us from bearing fruit on the True Vine (Jn. 15:1-11). It's about being returned into the arms of Jesus who loved us so much that He died and defeated death for us so that we will never be separated from His love! Our Easter will be ten times better knowing that through prayer, fasting, and alms giving, God has raised up the areas of our lives that were dead to new life! May God bless your Lent!

LEVEL ONE - THE HEART OF THE MATTER

This month, we come to the very heart of the Level I atrium: *The Good Shepherd!* At age three, *The Good Shepherd* (Jn. 10:3b-5, 10b, 14-16) is first presented and we hear Jesus giving us this image of Himself as the Good Shepherd. The children love that the Good Shepherd knows and calls each sheep by name and they recognize this very personal relationship that the Good Shepherd and the sheep have with each other.

The 4 yr. olds are given the *Parable of the Found Sheep* (Lk. 15:3-6) and to them, this parable is simply about the love of the Good Shepherd, who cannot be parted with his missing sheep. He searches, finds the sheep, and then is so joyful as he lifts the sheep on His shoulders and takes the sheep home to a celebration.

The 5 yr. olds are presented the *Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd*, which links together the Good Shepherd Parable (from when they were 3 yrs.) and the Eucharist. As Dr. Cavalletti says, "the link between the Eucharist and the well-loved parable of the Good Shepherd greatly enhances the child's enjoyment and serves as a kind of springboard that propels the child towards continued exploration and reflection on the Mass." We see through the materials that Jesus gives His whole self to us in the Eucharist because He loves us so much!



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Level One: Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd.

LEVEL TWO - PASCHAL MYSTERY

During Lent, there is an abundance of work and presentations! This month there is *Good Shepherd & the Wolf and Hireling*, *Psalm 23*, *Centurion Servant*, *City of Jerusalem*, *Origin of the Eucharist*, *The Paschal Narrative of Jesus' before Caiphus*, *work with the Maxims*, and *the Mystery of Life & Death*. This month in the newsletter let's focus on the Good Shepherd & The Wolf & The Hireling (Jn. 10:3-5, 11-16). We will briefly recall the previous knowledge we have of the Good Shepherd. We'll explain that a hired hand helps to take care of the sheep, but the Good Shepherd loves them more because they are His sheep. After reading the scripture, we see how the Good Shepherd protects the sheep from the wolf, even laying down His life for them. We discuss who the flock might be (the Church) and who the wolf might be (sin, evil, or anything that divides). The Good Shepherd unites us when sin would divide us. We know that Jesus died but He rose again! His love is more powerful than evil or death! We are called to trust in Jesus's care and not be afraid.

LEVEL THREE — MOSES STUDY, PART 2

When Moses was on the mountain God told him to go back to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go worship in the desert for three days. In spite of miraculous signs and wonders performed by Moses and his brother Aaron, Pharaoh refused. Only after God brought upon the Egyptian people ten disastrous plagues did Pharaoh finally surrender the Israelites. Not just for 3 days did he release them, but forever, so devastated was he by the show of God's awesome power in the plagues. The tenth and final plague was especially deadly to the Egyptians, and for us Catholics especially meaningful. You see, the tenth plague brought the angel of death to the door of both the Hebrews and the Egyptians to kill the firstborn of every family - human and animal! However, the Hebrews received special instructions to deal with this plague. God told them through Moses that each family was to have a special supper by procuring an unblemished lamb, killing, roasting and eating it. Several families could even sup together if procuring a lamb posed a hardship. After slaughtering, they were to take the blood of the lamb and splash it across the top and sides of the doorjamb of their front doors. Upon seeing the blood around the door, the Angel of death would not enter but pass over their homes. God also told Moses that from that day forward the Israelites were to celebrate this feast every year as a *memorial* of His saving power on that night and their ultimate freedom from slavery. Unlike are Jewish brothers and sisters, we Catholics do not celebrate this Passover because Jesus, being the new and perfect Moses, gave us a new and perfect Passover. We know that as Jesus (the Lamb of God) was being slaughtered on the cross, the lambs were being slaughtered for the Jewish Passover supper. However, because Jesus knew the time of his crucifixion was near, he had a new Passover supper with the Apostles the night before. During this last supper he told them "this is my body" and "this is my blood" (after all he is the new Passover Lamb) and "do this in remembrance of me" creating a new *memorial* of his saving power and freeing us of the slavery of sin and death! This memorial supper we have every Sunday. To be continued next month in "Moses Study: Part 3"...

Contributed by Luke Turchi (Level III Catechist).

NEWS & EVENTS

- **LENTEN SERVICE DRIVE:** March 19-24. Bring in baby items for Flint Crisis Pregnancy Services!
- **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION MEETINGS FOR RELIGIOUS ED:** Last one will be on March 23, 5:30-6:45 pm in Room 13.
- **FAMILY SERVICE NIGHT:** on Saturday, March 25 from 6:15-7:30 pm. We will be making "New Baby Blessing" baskets with items collected during our Lenten Service Drive. All families invited to participate!
- **RECONCILIATION TIMES:** during Lent, there are additional times for the sacrament of reconciliation. Saturday, 9:30-10:30 am; Sunday, 5:00-6:00 pm; Wednesday, 5:30 -6:30 pm; Friday, 5:30-6:30 pm. Take advantage of all the times offered and go as a family to receive this sacrament of healing!
- **Sacramental Retreat for 2nd grade and their parents:** May 6th, 9:00-4:30 pm.