

## Lenten Almsgiving

Lent begins this coming week. Ash Wednesday is March 1. Almsgiving and mite boxes are a rich part of Catholic Lenten tradition. Many of you may remember with fondness the mite box traditions from your youth.

To encourage almsgiving as a parish community, our Committee for the Common Good will once again be handing out mite boxes after all weekend Masses this weekend. Parishioners have responded very favorably to this tradition which we revived a few years ago. How you use your mite box is up to you! Two commonly used ways to contribute are to put aside the money you have saved from treats given up during Lent or you may empty the change in your pocket into the box daily.

Most of the alms money donated will go directly to our Social Services Ministry which benefits the community food pantry that helps our neighbors in need. The remainder will be sent to Catholic Relief Services to help the millions in dire need who benefit from their charity. This will help remind us all that whatever we do for the least of our brothers and sisters, both near and far, we do unto Jesus.

To help develop this tradition in our youth, we will also be distributing mite boxes at religious formation classes. Most of their money will likewise go to the food pantry with a portion going to the Catholic Near East Welfare Association to help the victims of violence in the Middle East, many suffering as a direct result of their faith. We want to encourage parents to take the lead in making this a family endeavor. Tell them what a difference their contributions can make from the money saved from those small things they choose to give up. Explain to them that our Lord is as interested in the positive things we can do in this world as with the things we give up in His name.

We hope this Lenten season is a time when all in our community can grow in their love for the Lord and their neighbor, for it is a prayer, fasting and giving that we receive the blessings of a grateful heart.

The mite boxes will be collected at all Palm Sunday Masses April 8 and 9.

