



# Campus Ministry Online

February 2012

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## Prayer for Catholic Schools Week

*Lord Jesus, Son of God,  
Thank you for the gift of Catholic education.  
Day after day, week after week,  
you give us many opportunities to grow and learn.  
Help us respond to the gift of faith so that we may be recognized as your disciples.*

*Amen.*

## Prayer for St. Valentine's Day

*Most Gracious Heavenly Father, You gave Saint Valentine the courage to witness to the gospel of Christ, even to the point of giving his life for it. Help us to endure all suffering for love of you, and to seek you with all our hearts; for you alone are the source of life and love. Grant that we may have the courage and love to be strong witnesses of your truth to our friends and family and to the whole world. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.*

## Catholic Schools Week

***We celebrate this year's theme: Catholic Schools:  
Faith. Academics. Service***

The following is taking place this week:

- Monday – Community Day - All faculty, staff and students are encouraged to wear shirts & sweatshirts with logos from their grade school.
- Tuesday – Student Appreciation Day – Cafeteria will be decorated and the cafeteria staff is preparing a special meal option.
- Wednesday - Vocation Appreciation Day - Catholic Schools Week Mass at 9:45 am (All Saints and St. Paul junior high students as guests).
- Thursday - Faith & our Nation – We focus on how faith & religion are an important part of our history.
- Friday - Faculty/Staff Appreciation Day –All faculty and staff are invited to a special lunch served by the Mothers and Friends club.

## St. Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day started in the time of the Roman Empire. In ancient Rome, February 14th was a holiday to honor Juno. Juno was the Queen of the Roman Gods and Goddesses. The Romans also knew her as the Goddess of women and marriage. The following day, February 15th, began the Feast of Lupercalia.

The lives of young boys and girls were strictly separate. However, one of the customs of the young people was name drawing. On the eve of the festival of Lupercalia the names of Roman girls were written on slips of paper and placed into jars. Each young man would draw a girl's name from the jar and would then be partners for the duration of the festival with the girl whom he chose. Sometimes the pairing of the children lasted an entire year, and often, they would fall in love and would later marry.

Under the rule of Emperor Claudius II Rome was involved in many bloody and unpopular campaigns. Claudius the Cruel was having a difficult time getting soldiers to join his military leagues. He believed that the reason was that Roman men did not want to leave their loves or families. As a result, Claudius cancelled all marriages and engagements in Rome. The good Saint Valentine was a priest at Rome in the days of Claudius II. He and Saint Marius aided the Christian martyrs and secretly married couples, and for this kind deed Saint Valentine was apprehended and dragged before the Prefect of Rome, who condemned him to be beaten to death with clubs and to have his head cut off. He suffered martyrdom on the 14th day of February, about the year 270. At that time it was the custom in Rome, a very ancient custom, indeed, to celebrate in the month of February the Lupercalia, feasts in honor of a heathen god. On these occasions, amidst a variety of pagan ceremonies, the names of young women were placed in a box, from which they were drawn by the men as chance directed.

The pastors of the early Christian Church in Rome endeavored to do away with the pagan element in these feasts by substituting the names of saints for those of maidens. And as the Lupercalia began about the middle of February, the pastors appear to have chosen Saint Valentine's Day for the celebration of this new feast. So it seems that the custom of young men choosing maidens for valentines, or saints as patrons for the coming year, arose in this way.

*These newsletters are a service of Mater Dei Campus Ministry in an attempt to:*

- 1. Share information about our Catholic faith to keep our community aware of some of the teachings of our tradition.*
- 2. Update our community of changes in understandings and rituals*
- 3. Assist parents with the faith formation of their youth.*
- 4. Provide links to sites with helpful information on faith and parenting.*

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## Lent: A Time to Reflect & Renew

This year Lent begins on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. It is a special time of prayer, penance, sacrifice and good works in preparation of the celebration of Easter. In the desire to renew the liturgical practices of the Church, *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of Vatican Council II stated, "The two elements which are especially characteristic of Lent -- the recalling of baptism or the preparation for it, and penance -- should be given greater emphasis in the liturgy and in liturgical catechesis. It is by means of them that the Church prepares the faithful for the celebration of Easter, while they hear God's word more frequently and devote more time to prayer"

### Why Ashes?

Biblical societies relied very heavily on wood fires for heating and cooking, which meant that keeping ashes under control was a major housekeeping task. Then as now, if a person was preoccupied with something serious, they didn't always tend to the housekeeping—it's the least of their concerns. Imagine that there is a death in the family. A friend stopping by to pay their respects might gently say, "Did you know you have ashes on your face?"

So ashes became a sign of remorse, repentance, and mourning. Today someone might wear a black armband to signify that they are in mourning; back then people put ashes on their foreheads.

You can find biblical examples of this in 2 Samuel 13:19, Esther 4:1-3, Job 42:6, and Jeremiah 6:26. During Lent, ancient Christians mourned their sins and repented of them, so it was appropriate for them to show their sincerity by having ashes on their foreheads. The custom has persisted in the church as secular society has changed around us.

It is most appropriate on Ash Wednesday, when we begin a period of sober reflection, self-examination, and spiritual redirection.

### Fasting & Abstinence

'Christ Himself said that His disciples would fast once He had departed' Lk. 5:35

**Abstinence.** The law of abstinence requires a Catholic 14 years of age until death to abstain from eating meat on Fridays in honor of the Passion of Jesus on Good Friday. Salt and freshwater species of fish, amphibians, reptiles and shellfish are permitted.

**Fasting.** The law of fasting requires a Catholic from the 18th Birthday (Canon 97) to the 59th Birthday (i.e. the beginning of the 60th year, a year which will be completed on the 60th birthday) to reduce the amount of food eaten from normal. The Church defines this as one meal a day, and two smaller meals which if added together would not exceed the main meal ...

### Helpful Websites

U.S.Conference of Catholic Bishops

[www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

Center for Parent/Youth Understanding

[www.cpyu.org](http://www.cpyu.org)

Diocese of Belleville

[www.diobelle.org](http://www.diobelle.org)

TEC Retreats

[chairperson@bellevilletec.com](mailto:chairperson@bellevilletec.com)

Quest Retreats

[washed\\_up\\_dj@yahoo.com](mailto:washed_up_dj@yahoo.com)