St. Michael the Archangel Byzantine Catholic Church
121
Founded 1905 ✝ Hermitage, Pennsylvania

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church
2230 Highland Road - Hermitage, PA 16148
Phone: 724-981-6680
www.stmichaelbyzhermitage.com

## Lenten Message from our Pastor

My dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Michael's:

This year, our Great Fast journey begins two days after Valentine's Day *(better finish all the chocolate today if you're giving up chocolate)*. Did you ever notice that the word LENT is in VaLENTine?

I like to think this is more than just a coincidence. Fundamentally, Lent is about love. Lent begins with a spirit of forgiveness. We are called to enter into the Great Fast more than just letting go of sweets and goodies, but letting go of hurts and anger. This is extremely difficult. So, we have the next 7 weeks to work on the things we need to let go of by doing lots of praying, fasting, and almsgiving.

**Prayer as love**: Prayer is not so much about making our voices heard, and trying to make something I want happen, but more about opening our hearts to the Love who is all around us, is quietly speaking to our hearts, and is constantly pursuing a relationship with us. Please have a good attitude when it comes to prayer this Lent.

**Fasting as love**: Fasting from meat, dairy, desserts, drinks, goodies, swearing, scrolling on our devices, etc. all are ways to say to God that, "I love you God more than these things." Fasting helps us focus more to love God than things. Plus, fasting is not only physically healthy but helps the soul grow in virtues. Please have a good attitude when it comes to fasting this Lent.

**Almsgiving as love**: "As often as you do it for my brothers and sisters, you do it for me." These are the words of Jesus reminding how important charitable works are, especially if we are to get into heaven. Charity makes us put off selfishness and our own ego. Please have a good attitude when it comes to almsgiving this Lent.

For some, the next 7 weeks will drag and for others, will go quickly. Don't miss this spiritual and beneficial opportunity this Lenten season to grow in love. Lent is not meant to be easy. It is challenging because we have to change our ways, schedules, and habits. And I think that God is so much worth more, than holding on to those ways, schedules, and habits.

I will pray for all of you this Great Fast, and ask for forgiveness of my wrongs in any way towards you.

Fr. Kevin