

## The Practices of Lent at St. Louise School, 2017

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a sacred time in the St. Louise School Community. The students, teachers and staff spend the 40 days of Lent preparing their hearts for the joy of Easter by engaging in traditional Lenten practices: fasting & abstinence, good deeds & almsgiving, and prayer & reflection. At St. Louise they don't just talk about these practices, they actively take part in them and integrate them into their school days!

The practice of fasting & abstinence begins on Ash Wednesday, when the entire school community forgoes their usual hearty lunches and partakes in a simple lunch consisting of a cup of soup, a dinner roll, and a ½ pint of milk. The distribution of the soup is done in a quiet, prayerful environment. The students consume this simple meal in silence while reflecting on how this gesture connects them to those of our brothers and sisters who don't have enough to eat on a daily basis.



***Ash Wednesday Soup Lunch***

Lenten good deeds & almsgiving start with each member of the community donating the money they would have spent on creating or purchasing a hearty lunch that day to Catholic Relief Services (CRS). This year, over \$1,000 was raised on Ash Wednesday, which will go to help the hungry in the local and international communities. The giving to CRS doesn't stop on Ash Wednesday; each student brings home a CRS Rice Bowl, which is a simple cardboard tool used to collect Lenten alms. Since becoming an official CRS program in 1977, more than \$250 million has been given internationally to support programs that prevent hunger and poverty around the world. By making sacrifices and contributing to their Rice Bowls during Lent, the students have the satisfaction of knowing that donations they are making - no matter how big or small - are making a difference in helping the less fortunate.



***Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl***

St. Louise prays & reflects throughout the season of Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday Liturgy. This year, the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders led the liturgy by acting out and describing the Lenten practices, and how the community can actively engage in them and reflect on their meaning and importance.



***2<sup>nd</sup> Graders Leading Ash Wednesday Liturgy***

In the final days of Lent, as they prepare for Easter during Holy Week, the school community participates in a walking Stations of the Cross, led by the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. This St. Louise tradition of walking from station to station outside around campus, instead of inside the church, includes the traditional prayers of Jesus' Passion, but also reflections and examples that make each station more relatable and relevant to the students. This year the Stations of the Cross will take place throughout the morning on Good Friday, April 14.



***Walking Stations of the Cross, Good Friday 2016***

With the Lenten traditions practiced and lived at St. Louise School, the students find true meaning and purpose in the season of preparing for the joy of Easter.