

Lifestyles

Wednesday, February 21, 2007

Kamidah School presents planetarium

Kamidah School will present the Mobile Dome Planetarium from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 27 at 1085 Eggert Road. It is the only traveling planetarium in the seven counties of Western New York and will be explained by astronomer and director Paul Krupinski.

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We rise again from ashes'

Lenten season begins today

by **JILL SCHMELZER**
Reporter



The Rev. George B Yiengste prepares the congregation at St. Pius X Church for the upcoming Lenten season.
Photo by John Rusac
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Ash Wednesday marks the start of Lent, the period that prepares Christians for Easter — the day Jesus Christ is believed to have risen from the dead.

Parishioners attend services today to receive ashes in the shape of a cross on their foreheads or hands.

And some church officials burn palms saved from the previous year's Palm Sunday as a symbol that "Man is dust, and unto dust you shall return," according to Therese Ketterer, director of religious education at St. Pius X Church in Getzville.

During the somber Lenten season, which lasts 40 days, people are to focus on purification. They are to practice prayer, fasting and almsgiving, Ketterer explained.

She said Christians should pray and get into the spirit of prayer to become closer to God.

"You can't have a relationship with a friend without speaking to a friend," the educator said.

The Rev. Carolyn Grohman of North Presbyterian Church said Protestants are not required to pray, fast or participate in almsgiving but are encouraged to engage in spiritual disciplines such as daily Bible reading and prayer.

"It's a time for spiritual growth," the pastor said.

Ketterer explained that the season is like an annual retreat, so that people can get refocused on the religion and their faith.

"In my own life, it's a time to focus on prayer," Ketterer said, noting that she prays every day all year long, but more so during Lent.

Fasting is an ancient tradition meant to purify the parishioner's life and focus on God and the faith of the religion, the Catholic woman said.

"People fast during Lent to ensure that there is room for God in their life," said Ketterer, who has been a practicing Catholic for 59 years.

According to a document of the Second Vatican Council, all Catholics between 18 and 59 are bound to observe the law of fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. This limits the person to a single full meal and avoiding food between meals. Light sustenance is allowed to be taken on two other occasions during the course of the day.

"Religious practice in the old days, before Vatican II, people would fast all during Lent," Ketterer explained.

The act of fasting is in addition to penitential practice meant to atone for one's sins. The church asks people to do something positive during these 40 days.

Many people give up something during the season. But Ketterer said instead of just cutting something out of one's diet, for example, they take the money that would have been spent on that purchase and give it toward a charity.

Almsgiving is the act of giving money to charity, perhaps to Catholic Charities, Ketterer suggested.

Besides these three basic practices during Lent, Roman Catholics are also required to practice abstinence from meat on Ash Wednesday, every Friday and Good Friday.

All Catholics who have reached their 14th birthdays are bound to abstain from meat on these days.

Ketterer theorized that this is because when Jesus was alive, eating meat was a luxury.

Protestants believe the ashes are used to remind them that life is a precious gift from God, but life on earth comes to an end, Rev. Grohman said.

"Lent is when we come to terms with our own mortality but remember the great promise of life after death," she said.

North, Amherst and Clarence Presbyterian churches will congregate for the Ash Wednesday service at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 21 at Amherst Presbyterian, located at the corner of Youngs and Lyndhurst roads.

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