

Lions... Lambs... and the Cross of Jesus

April 2017

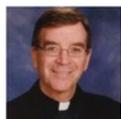
The winter just won't let go this year! But Spring is coming! And so is Easter! On [March 1st](#), Ash Wednesday, our Kindergarten students at St. Mary School received their ashes at the morning Mass and by the afternoon were busy making "lions" as they learned the expression: "March comes in like a lion and out like a lamb". Their lambs were ready on [March 31st](#), but the weather was just not cooperating. Surely the snow from the April Fools' Day storm will quickly melt away for we are more than ready to welcome the warmer days which lie ahead.

As unpredictable as the weather is for us New Englanders, we are reassured that our journey of Lent each year has the same predictable rhythm as we count the 40 days and the Sundays of this season. No matter what the weather, two weeks from [today](#) we will celebrate a new Easter and renew our faith in the new life of Resurrection. I hope the days of Lent thus far have been a "time of grace" for you, even if it only means that in some small way you have become just a bit more like Christ.

As Jesus entered into the years of his public ministry after his 40 days in the desert wilderness, he was very much like a "lion" – filled with passion, determined to bring good news of God's love, and fierce in his defense of the suffering and the poor. But in his last days on earth he became a "lamb". He was the Lamb of God, the one who would sacrifice his own life for the salvation of the world. Every year as Holy Week draws near, the image of Jesus' cross becomes more prevalent in our prayers and in the Church's liturgy. We focus more intently on the cross that Jesus bore for us.

Young children, who love to tell the [Christmas](#) story and celebrate the birth of Jesus, struggle to understand the cross of Jesus. I was visiting a first grade CCD class recently, and the children were talking about Jesus' cross. One student exclaimed, "I just don't get it. Why would anyone want to put Jesus on the cross?" One little girl responded emphatically, "It must have been boys! They didn't want to listen to him." How true. But as these children grow in faith may they come to know the cross of Jesus as the love of Jesus poured out for us. The mystery which we will ponder in the coming Holy Week is the great history of God's love which knows no limits. Jesus has offered all of himself for each of us and holds nothing back. As St. Augustine often said, it is a love that goes "to

the end without end". So let us journey to the end of Lent with the Lord and as we remember how his life on earth ended, may we be filled with the hope and promise of new life in his Resurrection.



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