

Shine the Light

Forty-three days before Easter, Catholics across the world can be identified by a dark cross of ashes on their foreheads. The ashes on our foreheads remind us we are called to repent for our sins. Ash Wednesday also marks the start of a hopeful journey, Lent, in which we rediscover the light of Christ in our lives.

Whether it be from cold weather that seems to have impacted every inch of our country or the down time following the excitement of Christmas, Lent comes at a time where we may find ourselves having grown weary, tired or lost in our faith. Extraordinary things continue to happen during the season of Ordinary Time. However, our lives may become cluttered or clouded by the everyday busyness or the challenges we face. Lent allows us to pause and rediscover who we are and what we value. Just as the shepherd leaves the 99 behind to find the lost lamb (Luke 15), we too are called to lead our lives in a way that communicates what is most important. What we say, how we act, and the choices we make during Lent help us to find the treasures that bring joy and light to our lives.

Each Lent, my class and I dedicate time to identify ways we can more fully find our faith. This often comes in the form of a Lenten promise. We ask ourselves how we can make a commitment to the important things in our lives. At home, you may consider fasting from the distractions in your life that keep you from fully entering into your personal relationship with Christ. Perhaps you may commit to giving alms, giving of your time and energy in service to those most in need, living out the Gospel message of endless compassion. Maybe your family will dedicate time at the dinner



table or in the car on your way home from practice in prayer, giving thanks for the blessings you encountered in your day.

In her book *Fresh Bread*, Joyce Rupp, O.S.M uses the phrase "little Easters" to recognize and remember the moments of great joy and happiness in her life. A mentor of mine recently shared that good lighting is the key to discovering "little Easters" in our life. While Lent may appear as a daunting 40 days, we cannot lose hope and trust in Easter and the Risen Christ. Hope is not only the product of Easter Sunday, but also in the many "little Easters" in which something within us is brought back to life. What steps will you and your family take on your Lenten journey to shine light on the "little Easters" in your life?

Submitted by Sheila Doyle, language arts teacher at Guardian Angels School, Archdiocese of Denver, Remnick 20 Leader and ACE Teaching Fellow.