

# YEAR of FAITH:



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Taking the Lenten Journey  
in the Year of Faith:  
Packing the Necessary Supplies



By Archbishop  
Jerome E. Listecky

In a little more than a week, we will gather to celebrate Ash Wednesday Mass, and the season of Lent will once again be upon us. Lent is that sacred time in our Church year when we embark upon an important and necessary 40-day spiritual journey. By God's design, the journey is a long and winding excursion through the difficult terrain of testing, purification and conversion.

It is encouraging to remember that we are not the first ones to make such a journey. God's chosen people wandered, not 40 days, but 40 years on their way to the Promised Land. Moses spent two 40-day periods on Mount Sinai, and the prophet Ezekiel endured the relentless sins of Judah for 40 days.

Even Jesus endured a 40-day ordeal. Prior to his public ministry, he wandered in the desert for 40 days and nights, fasting and wrestling with the Devil. Like so many of our ancestors in faith, Jesus walked the same journey we now walk. So we are not alone, and need not be afraid, as we

► See ARCHBISHOP, page 2.

## Woman Discovers Fullness of Christ in Catholicism

Sandi Schmitt admits that she should have felt fulfilled at Belmont Church, a nondenominational faith community in Nashville, Tenn. The church was home to popular Christian music artists Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith, and if you didn't make it to church at least 45 minutes early, you were hard-pressed to find a seat. It was vibrant, entertaining and engaging, yet Sandi couldn't help but feel that something was missing.

"I was engaged to Mark, who's now my husband. He was brought up Catholic and wanted to get married in the Catholic Church; that was really important to him," Sandi said. Mark was just beginning his journey back to the Catholic faith, Sandi explained, after leaving it as a young adult.

In addition to attending Belmont Church, the two also attended Sunday Mass at St. Edward's Catholic Church in Nashville, a faith community that, according to Sandi, was the exact opposite of what she was used to. Even so, the voice of God called out to her there.

"Something just started happening in my heart," she explained simply. "The power of the rituals and the Eucharist was just really speaking to me. I was hearing God's voice better in the Catholic Church."

After marrying, Sandi and Mark moved to Illinois. Sandi then went through the RCIA process and joined the Catholic Church during Easter Vigil 1984. However, it wasn't until years after joining that she truly began to deepen her understanding of what it means to be Catholic, after experiencing a falling-out with some friends who didn't agree with her choice to baptize her infant



Sandi Schmitt, a former Protestant "mega-church" member, heard God's voice at a Catholic Mass.

daughter in the Catholic faith.

"It was then that I started really researching the Catholic faith, and finding out why Catholics believe what they believe," she remembered. "All of that research really transformed me into the Catholic I am today."

Today, Sandi and Mark celebrate 29 years of marriage and are blessed with seven children and two grandchildren. They are parishioners of St. Alphonsus Parish, New Munster, and Sandi serves as the Director of Lifelong

Faith Formation for St. Alphonsus and St. John the Evangelist Parish in Twin Lakes. Sandi is also a doctor of ministry candidate at Mundelein Seminary in Illinois.

"My faith is part of who I am," she said. "It's the deepest center of who I am. Wherever I go, it's with me."



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## Keep College Kids Connected to Faith

As parents, you know it's time to start letting go when your kids graduate from high school and head off to college. Even so, there are plenty of ways you can help them stay connected to the Catholic faith once they leave home. Below are three ways to help your kids "keep the faith" while away at college.

**It's a Date!** Visit your child on campus once a month for Sunday Mass and brunch. After Mass, stop to talk with the priest or campus ministry staff so your son or daughter feels comfortable in their new settings. Be sure to grab a bulletin for parish info and upcoming events!

**You've Got Mail!** Include religious items with care packages, like a student prayer card during finals, rosary, book of prayers and/or Lenten devotionals. Many campus ministries even offer care package programs that share goodies and promote ministry participation – all you have to do is ask!

**Have a Great Trip!** Encourage and provide financial support (if you can) for



your child to participate in pilgrimage and mission trip opportunities.

Involvement in events like World Youth Day, Catholic student conferences, student retreats and service trips can truly be life-changing experiences that strengthen faith and

### Find additional campus faith resources by visiting:

[www.johnpaul2center.org/CampusMinistry.htm](http://www.johnpaul2center.org/CampusMinistry.htm)

[www.collegeconnectionforcatholics.org](http://www.collegeconnectionforcatholics.org)

build community with those who share similar values. Some programs may even offer college credit for participants.

### ► ARCHBISHOP, from page 1.

again take the 40-day Lenten journey through the wilderness.

Like any other trip, it is important to prepare before we embark on our Lenten journey. With the trip's purpose and itinerary in mind, we need to consider what we really need to bring along. What situations will we encounter? What will carry us through for 40 days? In other words, for the journey to be successful, we need to pack the necessary supplies.

As Jesus teaches in the Gospel for Ash Wednesday (Mt. 6:1-6, 16-18), packing for the journey of Lent is actually quite easy. No great array of luggage is needed. Instead we need to travel light, bringing only the necessary supplies of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. In fact, the less we bring of ourselves the better! Lent invites us to empty ourselves so that there is more room in our lives for God.

Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are

the perfect tools to facilitate self-emptying. Prayer turns our time and attention to God, making room for a deep encounter with the Holy One. Fasting opens up a longing to remind us that only God can satisfy our deepest hungers. Almsgiving opens us in generosity so we depend more on God and recognize him in the least of our sisters and brothers.

So it is time to get ready for the long Lenten journey. It is time to pack up the prayer, fasting and almsgiving and be on our way. May this Lenten journey be a blessed one, leading us all into a profound conversion of heart, so that we may arrive at a deeper love for God and follow his command to LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

## God Works in Mysterious Ways!

Is someone you know being called to the Catholic Church? Whether they are from a different denomination, or are thinking of returning to the Catholic faith, encourage them to learn more about the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) by visiting [www.archmil.org](http://www.archmil.org) and searching "Interested in Becoming Catholic?"



## The Sacrament of Reconciliation

For Catholics who have not celebrated the sacrament in a while, especially those who have been away from the Church, Lent is an excellent time to be reconciled to God and the Church. If your home parish doesn't offer confession times that are convenient for you, visit [www.archmil.org](http://www.archmil.org) and search "Find a Confession" to find a confession schedule that works for you. You can also contact your parish and request an appointment with your pastor for an individual meeting.

## The Gift of Creation: A Window into the Presence of God

"Where do you experience the majesty of God?" In answer to this question, the first word that often springs to our lips is "creation." In other words, creation acts as the window through which we look to gaze upon the Creator. Creation has this effect on us by God's design.

We believe that God alone is the author of all creation. Out of nothing he created the beauty of everyone and everything around us. This was not a random or accidental act; God created people and the natural world as an intentional expression of his divine love and wisdom.

Creation is, therefore, the first revelation of God's plan for us. God desires worship and relationship, and the majesty of creation is designed to elicit our responses of praise and communion.

We might say that creation is a kind of "first Bible" that reveals his saving presence in our lives.

As the first manifestation of God's desire for relationship, creation ultimately foreshadows all future covenants. God did not create us to abandon us.

Rather, he desires to uphold and sustain us through time, calling us back from the de-creation of sin, and leading us into the re-creation of


life in union with Christ.

Creation is a window into the very timeless presence of God. No wonder it has such a hold on us!

*Evangelization is a primary focus during the Year of Faith. Evangelization of one's own faith is a critical first step. If we don't know our faith, how can we confidently share it with others? This column shares what is taught in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. For information on where to access the Catechism, visit [www.archmil.org](http://www.archmil.org) and search "Catechism."*



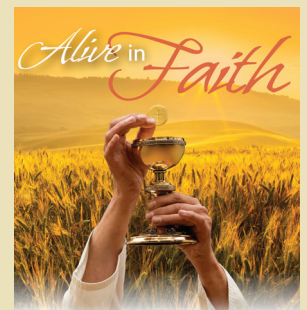
### "C4" Yourself!

Learn more about your faith through video. Each week during the Year of Faith, Bishop Donald J. Hying will be featured in a two-minute video to walk you through the Catechism of our Catholic faith. The videos will be posted on [www.archmil.org/year-of-faith.htm](http://www.archmil.org/year-of-faith.htm). Sign up to have a link to each newly posted video electronically delivered to you. Click on the RSS feed symbol  on the homepage of [www.archmil.org](http://www.archmil.org) to register for this free service!

## Year of Faith Steeplechase: A Lenten Day of Retreat for Young Adult Catholics

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee invites young married or single Catholics of college age through their 30s to get moving on their faith this Lent at a special steeplechase retreat, Feb. 23, 2013. Traveling by coach bus, participants will make a "talk and tour" pilgrimage of faith as they chase after the steeples of Milwaukee Catholic parishes. For more information about this retreat, visit [tinyurl.com/a79beq6](http://tinyurl.com/a79beq6).

This year's Catholic Stewardship Appeal theme is "Alive in Faith." Your contribution to this annual appeal will strengthen families, prepare priestly and lay leaders, provide faith formation for all ages and transform lives. Check upcoming bulletins for more information!



## Tomando el Camino Cuaresmal en el Año de la Fe: Empacando Las Provisiones Necesarias

Por Arzobispo Jerome E. ListECKi

En poco más de una semana, vamos a celebrar la Misa de Miércoles de Ceniza y la temporada de Cuaresma estará de nuevo con nosotros. La Cuaresma es un tiempo sagrado del calendario de la Iglesia cuando nos embarcamos en una importante y necesaria jornada espiritual de cuarenta días. Por el diseño de Dios, la jornada es una excursión larga y serpenteada con un terreno difícil de pruebas, purificación y conversión.

Es alentador recordar que no somos los primeros en realizar esta jornada. El pueblo elegido de Dios viajó, no por cuarenta días, si no por cuarenta años en el camino hacia la Tierra Prometida. Moisés pasó dos períodos de cuarenta días en el Monte Sinaí, y el profeta Ezequiel soportó los pecados implacables de Judá por 40 días.

Incluso Jesús sufrió una experiencia terrible de cuarenta días. Antes de su ministerio público, él vagó por el desierto por cuarenta días y cuarenta noches, ayunando y luchando contra el diablo. Como muchos de nuestros antepasados en la fe, Jesús caminó la misma jornada que nosotros hoy caminamos. No



estamos solos, no tenemos que tener temor, al realizar nuevamente esta jornada cuaresmal de cuarenta días a través del desierto.

Como cualquier otro viaje, es importante prepararnos antes de embarcarnos en nuestra jornada cuaresmal. Con el propósito y el itinerario del viaje en mente, necesitamos considerar lo que necesitamos traer. ¿Qué situaciones enfrentaremos? ¿Qué nos ayudará para pasar estos cuarenta días? En otras palabras, para tener éxito en la jornada, necesitamos empacar las provisiones necesarias.

Así como Jesús nos enseña en el Evangelio del Miércoles de Ceniza (Mt. 6:1-6, 16-18), empacar para la jornada

de cuaresma es en realidad bien fácil. No es necesario una gran variedad de equipaje. Sin embargo necesitamos viajar liviano, traer únicamente las provisiones necesarias para la oración, el ayuno y la limosna. ¡De hecho, mientras menos carguemos de nosotros mismo, es mucho mejor! La cuaresma nos invita a vaciarnos para que haya más espacio en nuestras vidas para Dios.

La oración, el ayuno y la limosna son las herramientas perfectas para ayudarnos a vaciarnos. La oración enfoca nuestro tiempo y atención en Dios, haciendo espacio para un encuentro profundo con el Santo. El ayuno nos recuerda que solamente Dios puede satisfacer nuestros deseos profundos. La limosna nos abre a la generosidad para que así dependamos más en Dios y lo reconozcamos en nuestros hermanos y hermanas que tienen menos.

Así que es el tiempo de alistarnos para la larga jornada cuaresmal. Es tiempo de empacar la oración, el ayuno y la limosna y empezar el camino. Que esta jornada cuaresmal sea bendita, nos lleve a una conversión de corazón profunda, para que así lleguemos a un amor más profundo a Dios y seguir su mandamiento de amarnos los unos a los otros.

## El Regalo de la Creación: Una Ventana a la Presencia de Dios

“¿Dónde experimentas la majestad de Dios?” Para responder esta pregunta, la primera palabra que sale de nuestros labios es “la creación”. En otras palabras, la creación actúa como una ventana a través de la cual miramos para contemplar al Creador. La creación tiene este efecto sobre nosotros por designio de Dios.

Creemos que Dios únicamente es el autor de toda creación. De la nada, Él creó la belleza de todos y de todo de lo que nos rodea. Esto no fue un acto al azar o accidental, Dios creó la gente y el mundo natural como una expresión intencional de su divino amor y sabiduría.

La creación es, por lo tanto, la primera revelación del plan de Dios para nosotros. Dios desea adoración y relación, y la majestad de la creación está diseñada para provocar nuestras respuestas de alabanza y comunión. Podríamos decir que la creación es como “una primera Biblia” que nos revela su presencia salvífica en nuestras vidas.

Como la primera manifestación del deseo de Dios para establecer una relación, la creación finalmente anuncia todo los convenios futuros. Dios no nos creó para abandonarnos. Al contrario, Él desea mantenernos y sostenernos a través del tiempo, rescatándonos del

pecado, y guiándonos hacia una vida en unión con Cristo.

La creación es una ventana a la presencia infinita de Dios, no es de extrañarse su poder sobre nosotros.



Cada semana encontrarán disponible un nuevo mensaje en nuestro sitio web, <http://www.archmil.org/Espanol.htm> y en el programa de radio “El Mensajero Católico” los sábados de 8 – 9 de la mañana en la Gran D, 104. 7 FM.