



## THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

March 3, 2024

*St. James Catholic Church*  
*3909 Harrison \* Kansas City, Missouri 64110*

### *Reflection from Fr. Garry Richmeier*

Isn't it interesting the things that change over time? For example, I used to exercise to stay in good athletic shape. At some point I realized that was no longer going to happen. Now I exercise simply to keep from getting fat! Another example: I used to argue with people to prove I was right and they were wrong. At some point I realized I was never going to succeed with that. Now I simply state what I believe to be true, knowing that some will agree with me and some will disagree, and continue discussion rather than argument (that's on my good days of course). Those are a couple of things for me that have changed over time and have made life for me much more peaceful and enjoyable.

As a species, we tend to have difficulty with some aspects of change, and we blindly hold on to how it has been in the past. This can cause us problems. For example, some hold onto a certain traditional interpretation of the 2nd amendment, even though it was written when guns were single-shot muskets and not automatic multi-round assault rifles. Mass shootings are the price we are paying for refusal to make common sense changes. Religions are notorious for setting in stone their laws, customs, rituals, and beliefs, ignoring many societal changes, and arguing that other religions are wrong. The situation in the middle east is only the most recent result of the refusal to adapt and grow. Religions' refusal to adapt and change is also why many young people today are not participating in organized religion.

We have begun the season of Lent, as many of us have done for many years. And it may seem like a tradition that never changes. We do the same rituals, hear the same scriptures, hear the same homilies, etc. But we are not in the same place we were last Lent. We are a year older, with a year of new experiences, and hopefully are a year wiser. And that year has brought many changes to the world around us which we must negotiate. So life forces us into a different spot from year to year, and even from week to week sometimes. Some strategies that have helped us in the past are still helpful, while some cause us problems. We need to discern which is which.

Lent can be a time of reviewing where we've come from and where we're going. This includes identifying beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors which may have helped in the past, but which are now problematic. Those are things to let go of, as difficult as that may be. Then we can consider what beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors can help us live the gospel message better at this particular point in time.

Change is inevitable. Being flexible in adapting to change can bring us more peace and enjoyment in life. Blindly holding on to "how we've always done it" in every aspect brings heartache, suffering, and division.