

LENT

Since 2007, our parish has found a new and practical way to observe the three great commandments of Lent; namely prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. This Lenten practice is entirely voluntary, but helps people practice prayer, fasting and almsgiving in an intentional and communal way.



Soup

I saw a famous man eating soup.
I say he was lifting a fat broth
Into his mouth with a spoon.
His name was in the newspapers that day
Spelled out in tall black headlines
And thousands of people were talking about him.

When I saw him,
he sat bending his head over a plate
Putting soup in his mouth with a spoon.

Carl Sandburg

Spirit Soup at St. Joseph the Worker

ROBERT PHELPS, O.F.M. CAP.



Each family participating in *Spirit Soup* will, one night a week, have dinner consisting of just soup. The soup, of course, can be made very nutritious with added ingredients. The family will ascertain the difference in the cost of the soup and in the cost of a 'regular' meal, and the difference becomes the alms. The family then places that amount of money into a special *Spirit Soup* envelope, and gives the envelope in together with the weekly offering, or in any manner they wish. Some families save the envelopes and offer the whole amount at Easter.

In 2007, we selected Casa de Maria, a medical facility in Honduras, as the recipient of the prayer, fasting and almsgiving of the parishioners. That year the parishioners gave their alms to Casa de Maria.

In 2008, we selected Saint David parish in Ward Nine in New Orleans, a largely African-American community whose church had been devastated, being between the two levees that had ruptured and flooded the area. One of our parishioners was travelling to New Orleans at the time and was able, at their parish mass; to hand deliver a substantial check to the people of St. David.

Last year, we turned our Lenten attention to the Lakota Sioux children living on a vast Indian reservation in North Dakota, and sent another large check to the mission.

This year we are beginning our fourth *Spirit Soup* endeavor, with the recipients to be **Hands Together**, a ministry that works with the poorest of the poor in Haiti, even before the dreadful events of January 12th. So far, the response from the number of envelopes that have left the church seems promising.

Our parishioners are not famous like the man in Sandburg's poem, but they are filled with the Spirit, and are glad to 'bend their heads over the plate and put the soup into their mouths with a spoon' for folks that are needy.

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