

# St. Paul's Epistle

March 2011

## The Musings of May

*A Message from Jim May*



Well, it's March and Epiphany ends March 9th. The day before will be Shrove Tuesday. This was an ancient celebration. On this day people cleared luxury items out of their cupboards. Things like eggs and wheat were considered luxuries. We wouldn't think of those being luxury today, but there was a time when they were.

Today we take these items and make pancakes. We have a great time buttering these pancakes and pouring on the syrup. The kitchen is filled with the smell of sausage. We have a great feast.

The next day will be Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. We fast, in our own ways, for 40 days. Why? So that those things we give up will remind us of turning away from and back to God.

Just the other day, I heard how a man stopped smoking. He did it with two dollars. He said one day he put his last pack of cigarettes in an old tin can. In place of them, he took two dollars and rolled them up like a cigarette. Each morning he put that two dollars in his pocket where he would have placed his cigarettes. Every time he craved a cigarette, instead of reaching for one he took out that rolled up two dollars, looked at them and put them back in his pocket.

Two dollars is not very much, but, every time he felt for that cigarette or looked at those two dollars, he was reminded what he was really trying to do: quit smoking. He has not had a cigarette in twenty-two years. If he had added two dollars to that can each month, he would have saved \$528.00. If he had done so each week, it would have been \$2288.00. You can do the math and figure out how much it would have been if he did that each day. This, of course, does not include the savings in cost to his health by not smoking all those years.

The point was not the money saved, but what happened every time he thought about his goal. Giving up items for Lent is kind of like that. Every time we think about what we have given up it should immediately drive us toward what we should desire: a greater relation with Christ. Think about it.

A final note, on Sundays during Lent at nine am. I will be teaching about the Eucharist. Each class will last 30 minutes. Hope to see you there.