



VERMILION CATHOLIC
a legacy of Mount Carmel

Parents,

Mar 21, 2025

I pray your Lent is going well. This season is always a good occasion to reflect on the value of discipline. Lent is known for not eating meat on Fridays and for "giving up" something for 40 days. That's not a bad thing, but those are a *means to an end*, rather than the goal. What is the goal? Freedom. And that brings joy. For me at least, despite the discomfort and annoyance of sacrificing certain things, I find myself more joyful during Lent overall.

The world tells us that freedom is the ability to do whatever we want, but it doesn't take much searching to find plenty of people with power and money to do what they want, yet find themselves miserable. Real freedom is the ability to do what is good. And getting that ability often takes work and discipline. I am not currently "free" to play Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* on the piano. Why? Not because someone is stopping me, but because I don't have the ability. I lack the knowledge and skill needed. So, even though I can listen to someone else play it, I'll never get to experience the unique joy of *making* that music myself.

All of life is like this. The ability to consistently do something good is called a virtue. Virtues - like self-control, patience, and prudence - are the ability, the freedom to do what is good. Like practicing piano to make good music, practicing these virtues doesn't take away our freedom, it increases it. So, as you continue your way through Lent, I encourage you to see your sacrifices - and all the other "obligations" of being Catholic - as a chance to increase your freedom rather than as restrictions on it.

As always, thank you for being part of our Eagle Family! Know that I'm praying for you all and am available if you need to visit with me about anything.

In Christ,

Father Alexander M. Albert,
Pastor, Vermilion Catholic, a legacy of Mount Carmel
St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church

Lagniappe: Of course, knowing how to have some plain old fun and make people laugh can also be a virtue. Here's a funny sketch on confession: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60dHIViOVvY>