

PASTORAL PRAYER: February 25, 1990

ETERNAL GOD - creator of the universe and father of our spirits - in deep reverence, we have come here this day seeking YOUR presence.

SPEAK TO US in this hour of eternal things, that through faith and trust, through the comfort and the promise of the Scriptures, we may have hope and be lifted above our own private concerns and individual anxieties into the light and peace of YOUR abiding presence.

WE COME TO YOU, O GOD, because we have minds that seek to understand the ultimate meaning of life. For we find it difficult to simply believe that life is blind process, without purpose and meaning, without order and intelligence...a creation without a CREATOR. Only when we find in You the power that is behind all, the purpose that crowns all, do our restless and searching spirits find their rest in YOU.

WE COME TO YOU, O GOD, seeking forgiveness...well aware of our shortcomings...our sins of the body and of the disposition. Deep in our hearts we know there have been times when we have failed You, dear God, failed to live up to the highest and the best we know, times when we have let trivial pursuits crowd You out of the picture. Cleanse us. Renew that right spirit within us.

WE COME TO YOU, O GOD, because we have suffered. Hardship and heartache, grief and illness, loneliness and separation have touched our lives.

We cry for the comfort of your nearness, the warmth of Your love, for Your abiding word that "all things do work together for good"... that "all things are possible"...that "more things are wrought by prayer..."

GRANT TO EACH OF US:

The vision to understand,  
The patience to endure,  
The strength to resist temptation,  
The power to bear our burdens,  
The willingness to help shoulder the burdens of others.

WE COME TO YOU, O GOD, because we are "co-workers" with you for the common good, for the improvement of life for all Your children.

Confirm within us the feelings of these lifting moments. The certainties and the resolutions at work within us. We pray that Your spirit may work in us and through us that others may know who we are and to whom we belong. All this in the spirit of Christ, our Lord.

## GREETING TO THE CHILDREN

### WELCOME

We welcome the boys and girls of our Sunday School who have joined us down here for a few moments before heading to their class sessions upstairs. In recent years it has become a "tradition" for the children to be with us on the last Sunday of the month. Welcome, boys and girls! It's good to see you all. And I understand that you're going to sing for us in a few moments.

### LENT BEGINS

The Season of Lent begins this coming Wednesday which we call "Ash Wednesday". Lent is forty days long and it helps us get ready for Holy Week - Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter. Before we know it, they'll be here.

During Lent I'll be wearing my purple stole...the one I wore during Advent. During Lent, we give more emphasis to our religious life and concerns. Some people give up certain things during Lent while others "take on" special religious practice.

Here in the Church one of the things we do is to give people a little "love loaf"...for them to put their extra change in to during Lent. We have a love loaf for each of you...and many adults as well. I'm going to pass them out to you now and invite you to use them...put your pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters in to them...and bring them back to the church on Palm Sunday or during Holy Week.

What we receive will help the hungry and the homeless of our city as well as people in other parts of the country.

### DISTRIBUTION

Now we look forward to your singing. Following your singing, the teachers will lead you out to your class sessions.

### CANDLESTICK DEDICATION

Today we are dedicating our two new candlesticks in memory of Toily de Freitas. The ushers handed out a flyer to you telling you a bit about Toily, the candlesticks and what we're going to do in these next few moments.

Toily and Eric first came in to our lives on a Sunday back in November of 1988, when their friend and former pastor, David Giles, was with us. Shortly after they joined the church and a year ago this month Toily went in to the hospital - Lenox Hill. In April she passed away from cancer.

From the moment we first met, we have sensed and felt that Toily and Eric are and have been "special" people in the lives of so many. Some of their friends are here today. We greet you. So pleased you could be here for this dedication prayer. Rob Taylor - an adopted son of Toily's - will join us at the altar, along with Eric, Eric's daughter, Althea, and their friend and former pastor, David Giles.