



My dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

We will begin the Lenten Season on Ash Wednesday February 14th. Each year during Lent we are invited to deepen our commitment to Christ and to his community the Church. Through our various disciplines of scripture reading, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and service to the poor and others in need, we deepen our discipleship ---following Jesus more closely and continuing his mission to build God's kingdom now in ourselves, our families and our communities to make it flourish anew.

Over these next few weeks, we are all encouraged to begin reflecting anew on the real purpose of Lent, the power such a season can be for us, and the real potential for a deeper commitment to our Catholic faith, and most important, a deeper communion of love with God. Such a deeper understanding could give us a new attitude for Lent.

Every year Catholics try to answer the age-old question: What should I do for Lent?

Reconciliation is what God does.

Lent is a wonderful time to celebrate the reconciling love and the healing grace our Lord offers us. We prepare for it by opening ourselves up, by reflecting on the areas of darkness in our lives into which God so deeply desires to shine a light. It might begin with a simple question: Where might God be offering me forgiveness and healing? Remember we have the sacrament of Reconciliation every day after our daily mass, we are having a Lenten Reconciliation service on Friday, March 23rd.

Praying on the Road to Calvary.

Living the way of the cross is inevitable. One of the most common traditions of Lent is to pray the Stations of the Cross. This prayer helps us reflect on the passion and death of Christ in preparation for Good Friday observance and the Easter celebration. Remember our schedule for the Stations of the Cross.

Pray with children or as a family.

We know the importance of prayer in our lives—as individuals, as families, and as a community. Prayer is especially important during Lent. The Lenten season is a time for reflection, evaluation, and repentance. Being a parent, grandparent, or teacher is a holy ministry and a sacred promise. Share your faith with children by letting them see and hear you pray, and by praying together. And don't forget about family dinners. Dinnertime is a great opportunity to start or enliven a tradition of family prayer during Lent. Remember Parish mission (Retreat – February 19, 20, 21) is another great opportunity to improve our prayer life.

## FAST AND FEAST

Fast from bitterness, feast on forgiveness.

Fast from selfishness, feast on compassion for others.

Fast from discouragement, feast on seeing the good.

Fast from apathy, feast on enthusiasm.

Fast from suspicions, feast on truth.

Fast from talking, feast on listening.

Fast from anger, feast on patience.

Fast from idle gossip, feast on purposeful silence.

The Diocesan Synod is calling us to a change of heart. Our community needs to grow in a spirit of making everybody feel at home. It needs to welcome every person who knocks on the doors of our heart so that we may welcome everyone with a heart-warming love which leads to charity, where one can feel welcome, whoever he/she may be, from wherever he/she may hail. Making people feel at home means that our love towards others is inclusive, irrespective of the life history of the other person, his/her background, his/her religion – or lack of it, his/her culture or his/her country.

As we start the journey of Lent, with its emphasis on fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, we have a chance at a new beginning in our own lives.

This season urgently calls us to conversion. Christians are asked to return to God with all their hearts, and to grow in friendship with the Lord.

Let us pray for one another so that, by sharing in the victory of Christ, we may open our doors to the weak and poor. Then we will be able to experience and share to the full the joy of Easter.

Have a blessed and fruitful Lent!

Fr. Philip George

Pastor

