



Lent: A Second Chance

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

People do not often look forward to Lent. Childhood memories of giving up candy or sitting through weekly Stations of the Cross come immediately to mind. Words like “sacrifice,” “discipline,” and “self-denial” are often used in ways which somehow project the connotation that Lent is to be endured rather than be viewed as a time of grace and spiritual growth.

Have you ever thought of Lent as a yearly second chance? Each year the Church gives us six weeks to take a long, honest and loving look into our lives to evaluate if our priorities and values are in line with God’s desires for us. It is a fair assumption that most of us have wandered from God’s path, thus Lent becomes that second chance, or do-over, to “return to God with a whole heart.”

Pope Francis invites believers to prepare for the celebration of the Paschal Mystery with mind and heart renewed:

Fasting, that is, learning to change our attitude towards others and all of creation; turning away from the temptation to “devour” everything and gratify our voracity; and being ready to suffer for love, which can fill the emptiness in our hearts.

Prayer, which teaches us to abandon idolatry and the self-sufficiency of our egos, and to acknowledge our need of the Lord and His mercy.

Almsgiving, whereby we escape from the insanity of hoarding everything for ourselves in the illusory belief that we can secure a future which does not belong to us. And thus to rediscover the joy of God’s plan for creation and for each of us, which is to love Him, to love our brothers and sisters, and the entire world, and to find in this love our true happiness.

This Lenten season let us endeavour to pursue personal spiritual transformation through forgiveness, service, humility, and prayer. Let us ask God to help us set out on a path of true conversion. Let us leave behind our selfishness and self-absorption, and turn to Jesus’ Pasch. Let us stand beside our brothers and sisters in need, sharing our spiritual and material goods with them. In this way, by concretely welcoming Christ’s victory over sin and death into our lives, we will also radiate its transforming power to all of creation. Let us not allow this season of grace to pass in vain!

Fr. Jerald D’Souza
Provincial Delegate



Lent 2021

“Whereas the aim of our charge is love, that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith.

1 Timothy 1:5

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

After this past year of prolonged life-altering events in our world due to the pandemic of 2020, we are invited by the liturgical cycle of the church to participate in the season of Lent. Escorted by the Holy Spirit into the spiritual desert of Carmel we are encouraged to spend a prolonged period of time, reflection, and prayer in our interior castle.

When Our Lord encountered the temple in Jerusalem (John 2:13:25) filled with unacceptable activities, He purged it. Following His teaching, the work of Lent for us as Secular Carmelites is not only fasting, praying, giving alms, but to purge our interior castle so that, again at Easter, we may offer Him a pure heart and a good and steadfast conscience as exhorted by the “Rule of St. Albert” which we strive to live with fidelity, and the letter of 1 Timothy 1:5.

Lent is the time to examine our own “temple” that is our interior castle. To purge our life of prayer of all that is not God is not that hard if we rest in the graces of the Holy Spirit and offer to God a pure and heartfelt resolution.

Just as the pandemic virus Covid-19 is mutating into new and more virulent strains that resist treatment, our interior life of prayer may mutate in such ways that we are no longer healthy in our spiritual life and require treatment. Our Holy Mother St. Teresa teaches us that a healthy spiritual life requires our constant return to the room of self-knowledge in our interior castle to purge all that is not of God. Our interior castle is a house of prayer and not a den of thieves.

Lent is the opportune time for this cleansing activity in our spiritual practice. We have forty days, and we must use this time well. By now you have probably realized that during the pandemic it came to light that it is not so easy to handle the gift of time well. It is harder to accept time at God’s hands than any other cross. Either we want to rush the time of the pandemic, and get back to our ordinary life, or we resent being detained in the midst of it, but detained we are!

So, let us use this special gift of the forty days of Lenten time by opening our hearts to receiving this gift of the Spirit, and let us spend our time in the interior castle as the Spirit wills. This implies that not only do we exercise the needed spiritual practices and prayer, but that we hand our Lenten time and its direction over in surrender to the Spirit. If we do so, our hearts will be renewed and purified in Christ whose abiding presence is always within our interior castle.

May each of you have a fruitful Lent in the interior castle, and a joyous Easter!

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