



Pastoral Letter for Lent 2014

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Entering Lent on Ash Wednesday (March 5), we recall Pope Francis' invitation to the Church worldwide to enter into the *Joy of the Gospel* (the title of his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*).

Lent means entering again into the Paschal Mystery. We, disciples of Jesus, recall our death to sin and our rising to new life that took place when we were baptized. As we accompany the catechumens who are preparing for baptism at the Easter Vigil, we pray over forty days for our own rebirth to new life.

We recall the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus through devotions like the Way of the Cross. Saint Paul proclaimed that in these moments, "The Son of God loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2.20).

Besides prayer, Lenten disciplines include fasting and almsgiving. The Church prescribes fasting and abstinence from meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. We encourage the practice of abstinence from meat also on the other Fridays of Lent for all in the Archdiocese. Fasting and almsgiving are fruitful ways to cooperate with the Holy Spirit's work in our lives.

As the Church prepares for an Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in October on issues touching on marriage and the family, we urge you to take steps to share your life of faith in your family. Whether your family is large or small, renew your commitment to the traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and works of mercy.

Attend Mass together on Sunday. Commit to doing so even if travelling during the March Break. Share a meal each week that involves cutting back a bit, so that together, you can save some money and give it to the poor. Make a sacrificial offering on Solidarity Sunday (April 6) to Development and Peace, the Canadian Bishops' international outreach body, or to another charity of your choice.

Our Lenten preparation for Easter should include a good confession. Follow Pope Francis's advice and let this sacrament of grace, hope and joy renew you!

I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ.... Now is the time to say to Jesus: "Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace." God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy... With a tenderness which never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, he makes it possible for us to lift our heads and to start anew. Let us not flee from the resurrection of Jesus, let us never give up, come what will. May nothing inspire more than his life, which impels us onwards!" (EG #3)

We wish you a Blessed Lent!



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