

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



On Ash Wednesday, our Lent began the moment ashes were placed on our heads. Lent is a preparation for Easter; the way we live Lent will determine the way we live Easter. Just as the Resurrection of Christ is preceded by his death, Lent invites us to voluntarily accept some form of suffering, some form of death. This is only possible because the Resurrection of Christ is waiting for us.

We received ashes accompanied by one of two formulas: “Remember you are dust and unto dust you shall return” or “Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel.” Repentance means a turning away from sin, acknowledging the times we have fallen in the face of temptation, the times we have chosen not to accept suffering. The good news is that there is a Gospel, that Jesus Christ was tempted in the same way we are, and that he has overcome these temptations for us.

He faced the temptations of bread, of idols and of history (not accepting his life). We too face these temptations every day; but Lent comes to by giving us the spiritual weapons of fasting, almsgiving and prayer; to combat the temptations of bread, idols and accepting our life, our history.

Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights, and he was hungry, he experienced suffering. The devil is there waiting, watching, counting the days, 1,2,3,...10...15... 20...30...35...37,38,39... and then he appears when Jesus is at his weakest. The devil never tempts us when we are on our game, when we feel strong, but waits for the moment we are at our lowest. Why should you be suffering like this, why should you experience want and need? He says.

He tempts us not to put God first, but to look for bread: get good grades, go to a good college, get a good career, secure financial security, have enough money to live comfortably; these are the most important things in life, the devil says. Not that any of these things are bad in themselves, but the devil suggests, tempts us, to think that life is only based on them. Once you have these you can then you can listen to the Word of God if you want, but let's get things straight, you need to have these things first.

Jesus answers this temptation by fasting: It's not true that my life, my security comes from bread! My life comes from God, he is the one who sustains me, he is the one who is present even in the moments of want and need, and to prove it I am going to fast.

We too are invited to fast this Lent, to voluntarily mortify our flesh; in doing so we disarm the lies of the devil. In voluntarily accepting to suffer in our flesh, we will experience the presence and consolation of God. The Church calls this time The Joyful Season of Lent. Do you believe that Lent can be joyful? It can, and it will be, as we experience through the Lenten observance that the Word of God -Christ himself- is truly the source of our life. Happy fasting!

Fr. Sean