

## FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



On Ash Wednesday we began the 'Joyful Season of Lent', as the Church calls this season.

Yes, Prayer Fasting and Almsgiving lead to joy.

Losing our life we find it, becoming poor in Spirit we experience the Kingdom of God, dying to ourselves we experience the Resurrection of Christ.

The Ashes placed on our heads on Ash Wednesday were accompanied by the words 'Repent and believe in the Gospel.'

Repent, of arrogance, selfishness.

Repent, consider others superior to oneself.

Repent, acknowledge that I am made of dust - I am not as important as I think I am.

Repent, turn my heart to Christ and the Gospel.

The Gospel, the news that Christ came for those were in the tomb, for those who are selfish, arrogant, conniving, haughty, proud, unforgiving, sinners.

The Gospel that Christ has overcome iniquity, discord, bickering, arguing, hurt, evil.

The Gospel that Christ loved us when we were his enemies.

The Gospel that we receive the spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, his own divine nature, we become bearers of the love of God.

Lent is a preparation for Easter; our Lent will determine how 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.

Jesus Christ faced the temptations of bread, of idols and of not accepting his life.

We too face these temptations every day; but Lent comes to help us by inviting us to fast, to give alms and to pray; practices which are directly linked to 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 to not seek our life in God, but to look for bread first: get good grades, go to a good college, get a good job, 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 too fast.

We too are invited to fast this Lent, to voluntarily mortify our flesh; in doing so we disarm the lies of the devil.

Happy fasting!