



Lent 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We will begin the solemn fast of Lent on February 22 to prepare ourselves for the solemn celebration of the Lord's Passion, Death and Resurrection. The schedule for Ash Wednesday and some of our Lenten observances are on the other side of this letter.

I think of this season as a time to deepen my relationship with the Lord, by looking inward and asking myself, *"Have I been a good disciple of Jesus? Where do I need to initiate change and repent?"* and *"What do I need to do to further the ongoing conversion of my heart?"*

You all are invited to walk with me throughout these 40 days. The ashes we receive on Ash Wednesday remind us of our mortality. The days of Lent can be a rich time of conversion of heart and change. Traditionally, we use three disciplines from the spiritual traditions to help us enter deeply into the Lenten retreat.

Prayer: During Lent, we can deepen our relationship with Christ by spending more time with Him. Prayer is about the **time** we spend with our God. We can use the traditional prayers, reflect on the daily Scriptures of Lent, learn how to just spend time in God's presence, or read a daily book of Lenten reflections.

Fasting: We are required to fast on Ash Wednesday. The fast is simple: no meat and for those who can, one meal, and the other two not equal to one meal. What we are doing is putting ourselves in solidarity with those who are hungry every day. Our fasting also creates a space for God. Fasting from our cell phones, social media, or whatever else fills our lives will make more space for Jesus.

Almsgiving: We have so much in our society which can numb us to the needs of others. I would suggest you and I use our closets as a source of prayer. How much is in there we really need? What is something I can share with anyone? My hope for our Lenten almsgiving is that it will blossom into joy for the people of Ukraine, who continue to need our help and prayers. More to follow on that!

Finally, Lent is also a time to ask forgiveness of God and one another. If I have offended any of you in anyway, please know how sorry I am. I would not want you to cease worshiping God at Mass because of something I did, or said, or did not do. I ask your forgiveness for any of my shortcomings.

Please know that you will be in my prayers during this sacred time. I look forward with joy, to celebrate Holy Week and Easter with each of you.

In the name of Christ our Pastor,
Rev. Thomas E. Konopka