



strengthening our faith

by rebuilding our heritage

February 2023

My dear parishioners,

Lent is almost here! It begins on Ash Wednesday, **February 22**. The day before we will have ordained two new auxiliary bishops: Bishop Evelio and Bishop Juan! We are blessed! A nice way to begin Lent. As we start our Lenten journey, let us try to heed Pope Francis' words that Lent is truly a time to live in hope!

Pope Francis reminds us that "Lent is a new beginning, a path leading to the certain goal of Easter, Christ's victory over death. This season urgently calls us to conversion. Lent is the favorable season for renewing our encounter with Christ who lives in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbor. Once again Lent comes to make its prophetic appeal, to remind us that it is possible to create something new within ourselves and around us. At the basis of everything is the Word of God, which during this season we are invited to hear and ponder more deeply. Let us find inspiration in God's Word, for it provides a key to understanding what we need to do in order to attain true happiness and eternal life. It exhorts us to sincere conversion. Let us not waste this season of Lent, so favorable a time for conversion!"

—Pope Francis, "Lent: A New Beginning," edited by Steve Mueller © 2018 All Saints Press

We Need Lent

As Christians we believe that **Jesus shared his life with us**; he is our friend, brother, and companion. This is the hope that awakens us each day. This is the power that spurs us on with enthusiasm. This is our hope: to live in light, in the light of Jesus.

We need Lent this year. We are challenged as a nation. In our deeply divided country there is a great need for civility, dialogue, and peaceful expression of concerns. Respect for one another and a willingness to dialogue and to learn from one another are essential. There is no other way if we are to be faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. While the future is unknown, this much is certain: the high priority that St. Matthew's Cathedral Parish has longed placed on **serving the poor, the homeless, the marginalized** and advocating on their behalf will not change. Nor will our commitment to **reaching out to immigrants and refugees**, documented or undocumented, or to **fighting racism and sexism**, or to **forming our young people in the faith**.

We need a renewed personal encounter with Jesus. We must remember that **Jesus IS here**, next to us, reaching out to us with open arms. Jesus is our only real hope. We look to the future, with Jesus. We work together towards a **renewed Church** right here in our midst. Let us join together this Lent in prayer and fellowship, reaching out to our brothers and sisters in the community—those hurting or in need, survivors, those who feel hopeless or abandoned. **Let us join together with Jesus.** Let us not waste this Lent, a season of grace and of hope leading to new life and resurrection! Now is indeed the acceptable time to hear the call to move on from darkness to new life.

My Lenten Challenge to You

This year we have another challenge. COVID-19 seems to be subsiding. The offices around us seem to be stirring with some activity. More cars are on the street. More people are on Metro. Slowly more parishioners are making their way back to Mass. Slowly! So **my challenge to you is this**: if you are still not joining us on Sunday, **ask yourself whether now is the time to return**.

It is Lent. A good time to join the community again. People have told me, "I watch the livestream. We are good." You may have a valid reason for not returning but the livestream cannot replace your physical

presence. It cannot bring you the Body of Christ in the Eucharist or in the community. We need both. Many have told me they really missed the Eucharist. They needed the real presence of Jesus both in Communion and in their brothers and sisters. **Do you have that need as well?** We miss you. Think about it because Jesus misses you!

Thank You, Muchas Gracias, to our Faithful Supporters

I want to thank all of you who continue to support your parish. You recognize that **we cannot meet our daily challenges without your financial support.** Thank you for helping to heat our cathedral, to support three choirs, to provide 17 daily Masses, and 6 Sunday Masses and confessions each week with the paid assistance of extern priests. Thank you for providing for so many families and individuals needing food, clothing, and shelter. Thank you for helping to maintain our parish staff who support and lead our liturgical, faith formation and social justice ministries, keep communications coming to you, including via a new website, and keep the Cathedral and rectory office operating.

Your response gives me great hope of keeping up with our budget needs. I know you will continue to respond, as **sustained giving is key to our survival as a parish.** Jesus is our ultimate hope, but we are his hands and feet in our homes and workplaces, and in the public square. Let us recognize this truth. All are called **to commit to good stewardship**, giving generously, recognizing that all is gift, all is grace.

Are you among the two-thirds of our parishioners who have not given a recognizable gift to the parish? If so, I ask – **will you please begin to give** something from what you have? We need ALL our members. Please, determine what you can give, and **enroll in Faith Direct.** Sign up online at <https://membership.faithdirect.net/enroll/DC284> or call Pam Erwin at 202-587-5150.

I am so grateful and sincerely appreciate and continue to count on your support.

Lenten Liturgies

There is no better way to heed the clarion call of Lent than to join the Church in the **celebration of the liturgies.** The prayers and readings—the **Liturgy of the Word**—and the **Liturgy of the Eucharist** give us the strength and guidance to journey through the desert to the empty tomb of promise, to rise with Christ on Easter Sunday after having been plunged into his death at our Baptism. If we journey with integrity, then we will arrive at the tomb and see the future, and, indeed, **share in his resurrection.**

On **Ash Wednesday, February 22**, we will wear the sign of penitence as a reminder of the need for our inner conversion, for the rending of our hearts, not our garments, and for our return to the Lord our God. (Joel 2:13). On Sunday, **February 26**, our catechumens and candidates will travel to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception to participate with Cardinal Gregory in the Rite of Election. Please keep these men and women in your prayers.

Stations of the Cross will be celebrated on Fridays of Lent at 6pm and Sundays (in Spanish) at 2pm. Our regular confessions will continue—weekdays, 11am to Noon and Saturdays, 4 to 5pm. On Tuesday, **April 4**, at least 10 priests will be available for confessions at our 12:10pm Communal Penance Service.

Know Someone Who Is Looking for Something? Maybe It's God

Enclosed is our Lenten brochure—please pick up extras in the Cathedral next weekend, February 18/19, for family, friends and co-workers. Please also take advantage of the opportunity during Lent to reach out to people who you know have drifted from their faith. Will you think about people in your life who might appreciate an invitation to come back to Church, for prayer, Mass or the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Please keep the staff and me in your prayers and be assured of my prayers for a blessed Lent.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson
Rector