



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

In the first Lenten message of his pontificate, Pope Francis asks us to reflect on a theme that motivates his deep spirituality, lived witness and prophetic teaching: *the way of poverty*. He is inspired by the words of St. Paul: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). Jesus' self-emptying shows us how to love authentically. For *our* sake, he became poor. Indeed, such poverty is a telling characteristic of love. Our own self-sacrifice, self-emptying, is necessary if we are to follow Jesus.

This Lent we can resolve to make great strides in going the way of poverty, through our participation in the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, as well as through our parishes' special Lenten activities. Humble prayer and purposeful fasting lead us to charitable works and concern for the well-being of another. The Holy Father tells us that "true happiness is the compassion, tenderness and solidarity of Jesus' love." When we love as Jesus did, when we treat our neighbor as the Good Samaritan treated the man left half dead on the roadside, Christ's poverty takes on our flesh and we experience a happiness that no fleeting pleasure can rival.

Each of us has desert demons that hinder our journey with Christ. We know them well: addictions, pride, jealousy, anger, selfishness, etc. We struggle to empty our lives of such sinfulness so as to make room for Christ and service of our neighbor. Lent 2014 is a good time to reflect on my attitude towards others. For instance, am I pretty indifferent when it comes to concern for others? Is my philosophy of life: 'I take care of my own and that's enough'?

We recommit ourselves this Lent to seek holiness and grow in our love of Jesus expressed in our respect and concern for our neighbor. A faith that is lived only internally, with no signs of it reflected in the witness of our lives, is a hollow, shallow faith. I pray that the flame of faith be stirred in each of us these next forty days so that we might make room for the life that Easter promises.

Through the graces and spiritual strength we receive from our participation at Eucharist and other Lenten devotional practices, God clears our vision and opens our hearts to see and respond to the needs of those around us. As a pilgrim people, seeking to follow Jesus, the Crucified and Risen One, we embrace this Lenten summons to strengthen our bond of self-emptying love and concern for our sisters and brothers. Let us pray for each other this Lent and always!

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Faithfully Yours in Christ,

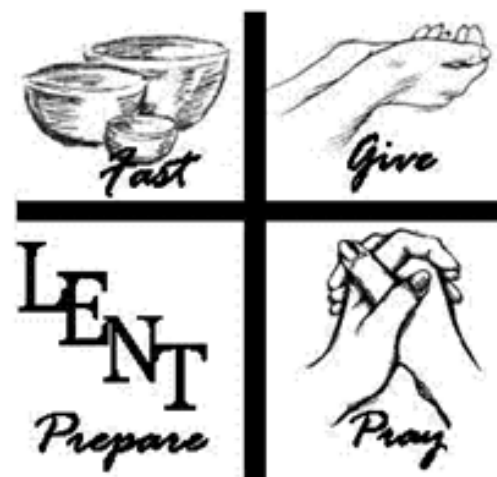
Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg

Why we receive the ashes:



Following the example of the Ninevites who did penance in sack-cloth and ashes, our foreheads are marked with ash humble our hearts and remind us that life passes away on Earth. We remember this when we are told "Remember, you are dust, and unto dust you shall return." Ashes are made a symbol of penance by the blessing of the Church, and they help us develop a spirit of humility and sacrifice. The distribution of ashes comes from a ceremony of ages past. Christians who had committed grave faults performed public penance. On Ash Wednesday, the Bishop blessed the hair shirts which they were to wear during the forty days of penance, and sprinkled over them ashes made from the palms from the previous year. Then, while the faithful recited the Seven Penitential Psalms (Ps 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130 & 143), the penitents were turned out of the church because of their sins – just as Adam, the first man, was turned out of Paradise because of his disobedience. The penitents did not enter the church again until Maundy Thursday after having won reconciliation by the toil of forty days' penance and sacramental absolution. Later, all Christians, whether public or secret penitents, came to receive ashes out of devotion. In earlier times, the distribution of ashes was followed by a penitential procession.

The Ashes: The ashes are made from the blessed palms used in the Palm Sunday celebration of the previous year. The ashes are christened with Holy Water. While the ashes symbolize penance and contrition, they are also a reminder that God is gracious and merciful to those who call on Him with repentant hearts. His Divine mercy is of utmost importance during the season of Lent, and the church calls on us to seek that mercy during the entire Lenten Season with reflection, prayer and penance.



The Roman Catholic Church

of St. John the Baptist



Lenten Regulations for 2014

☞ Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of both fast and abstinence. Fasting, or eating less, obliges those between the ages of 18 and 59.

☞ All Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence from meat. This rule applies to all who are 14 years of age or older.

☞ The entire season of Lent should be observed in a spirit of prayer and penance. Spending extra time in prayer or bible study, attending daily Mass, praying the Rosary, visits before the Blessed Sacrament, voluntary sacrifice and self-denial, combined with works of charity and service to others, are all excellent ways to obey the Lord's command to reform our lives and to prepare for the joyful celebration of Easter.

☞ All Catholics who have reached the age of reason must confess their serious sins in the Sacrament of Penance at least once a year. They must also receive Holy Communion at least once each year during the Easter season, which this year extends from March 9th the First Sunday of Lent, until Trinity Sunday, June 15th.



Ash Wednesday – March 5, 2014

Day of Prayer, Fast and Abstinence

Lent is a holy time when God draws us home as individuals. But it is also a very communal journey. We never journey alone no matter how "lonely" we may feel. We are always journeying together. Come and journey with us this Lent. Let us pray for each other on this journey, especially those who need and desire a change of heart on this pilgrimage to Easter joy.

9:00AM Mass and Distribution of Ashes at **St. John's**

12:05 PM Mass and Distribution of Ashes at **St. John's**

1:30PM Mass and Distribution of Ashes at **Seton Catholic, 206 NY Rd.**

6:00 PM Mass and Distribution of Ashes at **Newman Center**

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from

9:00 AM – 9:00 PM

In our

Holy Family Adoration Chapel

Local Daily Masses During Lent

The Roman Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist

(St. John's) 9:00AM, Monday - Friday

(Newman Center) 6:00PM, Monday - Friday

St. Alexander's Church

8:00AM, Monday -Thursday and 7:00PM, Friday

St. Peter's Church

7:00AM & 12:05PM, Monday-Friday

Our Lady of Victory

8:00AM, Monday-Friday