

Lent Is A Continual Summons

The following is a letter sent by Pope John Paul II to the Church in Rome and to all its communities.

I greet in the Lord the Church in Rome, all its communities and above all the parishes, all my brothers in the Episcopate and in the priesthood, families of men and women religious, seminaries, colleges and universities. I greet all those who cherish the memory of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, manifested in the liturgy of Lent, all those who, throughout this blessed period, wish to prepare to participate in the paschal Mystery of his Death and Resurrection in order to obtain the salvific fruits of conversion and grace in the Holy Spirit.

Lent is a reminder. It reminds us of the way that the Lord indicated to us with his forty days' fast at the beginning of his Messianic mission. It reminds us also that each of us — at whatever point of his earthly way he may be — must continually be converted to God, must shun the "threefold lust" (cf. Jn 2:16), the "works of the flesh" (Gal 5:19), which "resist the Holy Spirit" (Acts 7:51), and make room for the "gifts of the Spirit" (cf. Gal 16:26), following Christ in prayer and fasting, to the extent to which he is capable. If, therefore, we feel we are in that unity with Christ, which the very name of Christian recalls to our memory, we cannot admit that his exceptional period in the life of the Church should not be distinguished in some way in our life.

Let us observe at least the present, already reduced, discipline of fasting. As far as possible, let us spontaneously add works of abstinence and some renunciation of ourselves, without which self-mastery does not exist.

Let us live better the spirit of repentance. For this purpose a more abundant measure of prayer than the usual one is necessary, as well as is meditation on the Passion of the Redeemer, and finally commitment in the multiple works of love of one's neighbor, to which our age offers so many opportunities. An age in which millions of adults and children literally die of hunger, while at the same time the cult of luxuries and a surfeit of materialism prevail in other countries and environments.

'Let us recall that the Christ of Lent is above all the Christ who is waiting for us in every suffering man . . . and judges according to what we have done to the least of these brothers . . .

Let us recall that the Christ of Lent is above all the Christ who is waiting for us in every suffering man, he who stimulates us to love and judges according to what we have done to one of the least of these brothers of ours (cf. Mt 25:40).

Lent, therefore, is not only a reminder, but a continual summons. To enter this period and live it in the spirit handed down to us by the most ancient and still living tradition of the Church, means: to open one's own conscience. To let Christ himself open it with the word of his Gospel, but above all with the eloquence of his Cross.

Lent is, therefore, an exceptional opportunity to save in each of us "the inner man" (Eph 3:16), so often forgotten, who, thanks to the Passion and the Resurrection of Christ, is created "in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:24).

Let not this time pass for us without the Sacrament of Penance, without the examination of conscience, without repentance for our sins and at the same time the resolution to improve, let it not pass without confession and absolution.

The Christ of Lent, is he who, from his Cross, in his Passion and Death, utters, in a way, God's supreme last word of love for man, the love of the Father for the prodigal son. Only this Love is creative; only it has the power to save man and the world. Let us not remain indifferent to it. Let us try to respond to it. Let us seek this response in our heart. Let us seek it in the life of the Church in the course of Lent.

Olympian Chairman Of Life Run

Olympic Gold Medalist Frank Shorter is the national chairman of National Run For Life Day, scheduled for April 26. The local chairmen of the event, which will benefit the Genesee Valley Chapter of the American Heart Association, are Michael Perri and Thomas Schaich.

More than 30,000 runners in 115 cities, including 350 runners here in Rochester, participated in last year's National Run For Life Day.

"We see this run as an opportunity to support the research, education and community service programs of the American Heart Association through pledges gathered by the participants, as well as a chance to introduce running to the general public as one beneficial form of lifelong physical exercise," Schaich and Perri said.

Those interested may obtain registration forms by contacting the American Heart Association office at 461-5590.

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Scientific experiments on the Shroud suggest that the man wrapped in it had been scourged, crowned with thorns, his wrists and feet pierced with nails, and had been stabbed in the side. All details that agree with the description of Jesus' death.

The Holy Face of the Shroud has been reproduced many times. But the lovely free Holy Face Card offered to you here is very special. Not only was it expressly designed to celebrate this Easter season, but it was blessed in the Holy Shroud Chapel in Turin where the Shroud is kept. Inside the Card is a brief history on the Shroud, with Meditation to the Holy Face and Prayer for a Peaceful Death. The Card is ours alone and cannot be obtained elsewhere.

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