

**This Week's Message  
from Fr. Amesse  
March 1, 2026**



Many of you know by now that I have been more than just “under the weather.” These past weeks have been a real trial for me physically. I am currently recuperating in Tewksbury, and while I am grateful for the care I am receiving, I miss being at the Shrine very much.

Ash Wednesday has now passed, and it was difficult for me not to be there with you. I always find it moving to trace the ashes on your foreheads and say the words, “You are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Those words are humbling — for you, and for me. This year, I had to hear them in a different way. Illness has a way of reminding us of our weakness and our dependence on God.

None of us chooses our trials. Yet they come. The Lord does not promise us a life without suffering, but He does promise to walk with us through it. The psalmist says, “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted” (Psalm 34:18). I have felt that closeness in your prayers, your cards, and your concern.

Lent has begun. You are now walking that Lenten journey together at the Shrine — gathering for Mass, for Confession, for the Stations of the Cross. I long to be back with you, to pray beside you, and to journey toward Easter as a community once again.

For now, I offer this time of weakness to the Lord. Lent reminds us that the cross is never the final word. God brings life even out of suffering. I look forward to the day — soon, I hope — when I can return and continue that journey with all of you.

Thank you for your prayers and your faithfulness. They mean more than you know.

**I remember you at Mass.**