



*"Jesus then said to his disciples: If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross, and follow me."*

*(Mt 16:24)*

Lent/Easter 2024

My Dearest Parishioners and Friends,

Faithful Catholics throughout the world will begin their Lenten journey this Wednesday with the imposition of ashes on their foreheads. Ashes remind us of our mortality (i.e., Remember that you are dust and unto dust you shall return) and the fragility of life. Repentance is at the very heart of this penitential season. The need for conversion never ends and the Church provides us with the necessary grace to accept with courage and humility the changes required to practice true discipleship. Additionally, the Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving allow us to consciously and practically embrace the Cross and consecrate ourselves in His Holy Name.

I invite you as always to participate fully in the rich, time-honored traditions of our Faith. There will be many opportunities to draw closer to our Lord through prayer and devotional practices here at St. Joe's. Daily Mass, the reception of the Holy Eucharist, and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament unite us most closely with the Lord. We have an incredibly devoted and joyful morning Mass community, where this is lived out on a daily basis. Come join us! The Neo-Catechumenal Way will meet every weekday during Lent at 5:00 AM in Church for morning prayer and have invited our parish family to pray with them. The Sacrament of Penance, offered every Saturday before the Vigil Mass, and our Lenten Penance Service are wonderful ways to prepare for the great feast of Easter. Stations of the Cross, celebrated every Friday during Lent, is the most traditional of our devotions, and makes concrete Jesus' Way of the Cross. Finally, our Patronal feast day, the Solemnity of St. Joseph, always falls during Lent. We will have a special Mass at 9:00 AM on March 19th, with Benediction and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by a St. Joseph Table in Ferdinand Hall, prepared with breakfast offerings. A complete list of our Lenten and Triduum schedule is on the reverse side of this letter. Please partake in as many of these events as possible.

May our Lenten journey help us to arrive at Easter with hearts renewed and a faith on fire for the Lord. In the words of the disciples on the Road to Emmaus: "Were not our hearts burning inside us as He talked to us on the road and explained Scripture to us." (Lk 24:32)

Wishing you a Blessed Lent and a wonderful week of work and prayer.

May God love you and all those you love,

*Fr. Timothy P. Andres, O. Carm.*

