

February 28, 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We journey through Lent together, accompanying one another towards human fulfillment, happiness and joy which God has prepared for us.

Believing that God loves us, indeed delights in us, we accompany each other in good times and bad, through prayer, through self-sacrifice and forgiveness.

The Church *invites* us to make this Lenten journey; we can't be forced into it. We must choose to make this Lent a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving; otherwise we are only going through the motions, without meaning and most certainly not in communion with others. Our free choice in participating in the Lenten exercises is critically important. In fact, one author suggests Lent is really all about freedom:

“Lent is about freedom which is gained only through exposure to the truth... Truth is not a thing, it is rather an event. Truth happens to us when the coverings of illusion are stripped away and what is real emerges into the open... The Spirit promises to bring us into truth by stripping away some more of the insulation and barriers which have separated us from living contact with reality, the reality of God, of God's world, and our true selves” (A Season for the Spirit, Martin Smith).

In other words, the Spirit of Lent turns our journey into a search. Like the Magi in search of the infant King, like the women searching for Jesus at the empty tomb so too our journey is a search for *“the reality of God, of God's world and our true selves.”*

We may not have the wisdom of the Magi to guide us, nor the courage of the women at the empty tomb, but we do have the power of prayer! Can we carve just 10minutes out of our day for prayer? It will provide peace for our journey. Can we make a generous offering to Share Lent Collection (Latin American Mission Project and Development and Peace) to assist the less fortunate? Can we give of our time on Solidarity Sunday as Glenda Alawirin arrives in our Diocese to speak on behalf of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace? Being from the Philippines, Glenda will bring interesting information about our tremendous financial response, almsgiving, to the Philippine hurricane disaster of last year. Finally, can we fast on this journey? Not only is fasting a sign of solidarity with those around the world who are hungry, but it is also a sign that we are more than what we eat; we define ourselves and our importance not by what we consume but by our relationship with God, our Creator. Lent invites us on a spiritual journey to search for the truth through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Sincerely yours in Christ
Most Reverend Richard Grecco
Bishop of Charlottetown