

Greetings of peace, my dear Franciscan Family!

I pray this finds you well and filled with the peace of the Lord!

Well, it is that glorious time of year again! Our Seraphic Father Francis said that for us, Lent is all year round. And for these six weeks, Holy Mother Church will share it with us!



During Lent, we are asked to devote ourselves to doing three things: to seek the Lord in **prayer** and Scripture reading, to serve by **giving alms**, and to sacrifice self-control through **fasting** (USCCB). I humbly invite us to faithfully and mindfully observe all three.

The Holy Father, Pope Francis tells us, *“the celebration of the Paschal Triduum of Christ’s passion, death and resurrection, the culmination of the liturgical year, calls us yearly to undertake a journey of preparation, in the knowledge that our being conformed to Christ is a priceless gift of God’s mercy.”*

In your journey to being conformed to Christ, please find attached some goodies to assist you during these six weeks. Again, I include my **Lenten Season of Peace** for you and your fraternity members to *mindfully fast and feast*. I also include Lenten calendars from the **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops** (USCCB), **Creation Justice Ministries**, and the **Michigan Interfaith Power and Light**, who have created a Plastic Fast calendar. There is also a Lenten Reflection Guide from the **Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns**. I invite you to check out more Lenten resources from the **USCCB** <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/lent/index.cfm> and the ever-faithful **Catholic Rice Bowl** from **Catholic Relief Services** <https://www.csricebowl.org/>.

“... I was thirsty and you gave me drink...” (Matthew 25:35)

Article 15 of our Holy Rule states: *“Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith.”*

Our Holy Father exhorts: **“Almsgiving**, whereby we escape from the insanity of hoarding everything for ourselves in the illusory belief that we can secure a future that does not belong to us. And thus to rediscover the joy of God’s plan for creation and for each of us, which is to love him, our brothers and sisters, and the entire world, and to find in this love our true happiness.”

One such courageous initiative where we can give alms is our annual **Lenten H2O Project**, an international project to promote Christian solidarity, advocacy and financial support for poor communities in developing and under-developed nations who have no access to clean drinking water.

For two weeks in Lent, abstain from drinking any beverage except water – preferably tap water, and set aside any money normally spent on sodas and Starbucks. In solidarity with our brothers and sisters who do not even have clean water to drink, we increase our connections, awareness and responsibility to poor communities and God’s Creation. You can choose to give individually or collectively with your families, fraternities or faith communities.

Please send all contributions to the **H2O Lenten Project 2020**, c/o Claudia Kauzlarich, 2007 Maverick Trail Harrisonville, MO 64701-1545. **Make the check payable to OFS-USA**; with H2O Project in the memo line. And thank you for your generous contributions.

SAVE THE DATE: We are gearing up for our National Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Gathering, at the St. Maximilian Kolbe Shrine in Libertyville, IL, beginning with dinner on Thursday, May 7th and concluding on Sunday, May 10th. And yes, we realize this is Mother's Day weekend. Spend time with Our Lady, Mother Mary; St. Maximilian had a special devotion to Our Lady! Watch your inbox for more details.

Thank you all and I wish you a very blessed and peace-filled Lenten season!

***Carolyn, ofs
National Animator
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation***