

Bulletin Article for **First Sunday of Lent**

Feb 29/March 1, 2020

Be honest: How many are happy that Lent is here? Lent commonly gets some bad press. Some people think of Lent as being a time of acts of self-denial, meatless Fridays, dwelling on sin in our lives, and even some of the music that has been written for Mass during Lent is written in a minor key giving us a heavy and foreboding tone.

Actually, I LIKE Lent. I like Lent is because Lent is a Liturgical Season that is filled with Grace; Grace that demonstrates to the world the powerful Love that God has for the world.

Sure, Lent is a time that invites us to take the time to look at our brokenness and our sinfulness, but we do this so that we might come to realize more deeply, more profoundly, the immensity and the intensity of God's Love for us which has redeemed us in the Blood of Jesus!

Lent is about being reminded that God is relentlessly pursuing us!!!

Lent is a time that invites us to change and to start anew. This "change" is effected by doing something every day that might be a little out of the ordinary, but whose purpose is to remind us that "This is Lent", and so to remind us every day that we are in a season of conversion, hope, and growth. To help us with this "every day" approach to Lent, the USCCB has put together a Lenten Calendar which I have printed up and am making available for all who would like to journey through this Holy Season with a little "to do" activity day by day.

Lenten practices are not about impressing God, but the purpose that they DO serve is to benefit us!! Lent is a season of repentance, self-denial, and conversion NOT driven by a negative and morbid outlook on the self and the world. Rather, Lent is driven by the Hope and Victory of Easter!! And to the extent that we engage deeply with the reality of our own sinfulness and need for conversion now will be the extent to which we taste the sweet Victory of Love who died for us on the Cross so that we might have life and salvation!

Lent is a healing time when God calls to us...no pleads for us to return to Him, and to draw closer *to* Him.

Lent is an invitation to us from God to be made anew and to be healed of all of our brokenness.

It seems to me that Lent is a pretty amazing season that we are now invited to live out. So, "Happy Lent!!!" indeed! - **Fr. Tom Gaughan, CSC**