



## A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

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**4 March 2019, 8:00 AM**

### **Trained all over again to follow Christ**

This past January, the USA bishops made a six-day spiritual retreat at the request of Pope Francis, in response to the recent crisis of clergy sexual abuse.

At the end of the retreat, I remarked to someone that I feel like I have been trained all over again on how to be a follower of Jesus.

Actually, I think that might have been the intent and purpose the Pope had for telling the bishops to go on retreat – you guys need to be converted, again!

And who doesn't need conversion? It's a curious thing, but people who are least in need of conversion are usually the first to assert their need; and people who need it the most are quick to pooh-pooh the idea.

The priest who preached the retreat organized his remarks around three moments:

The first: to be with Jesus, that is, to have a personal relationship with him expressed in daily prayer and in Sunday Mass.

The second: to learn from Jesus the (radically) different way his followers are supposed to see, think, speak and act, which is now recorded in the four gospels.

And the third: to follow Jesus, especially in love of neighbor, expressed in forgiving and serving others, no matter who, or whether or not the person is deserving, asks nicely, is aware of the cost, or is grateful.

I see a strong link between the way the retreat played out and how to organize our regimen for the holy season of Lent, for example:

- 1) Be with Jesus by taking time for daily prayer and Sunday Mass;
- 2) Learn from Jesus by reading one of the gospels, a little bit each day;
- 3) And follow Jesus' example by making peace where needed and by helping the poor.

If we were to spend Lent that way, it might have the same outcome as a retreat, such that when Lent is over, at Easter, we might remark to someone: I feel like I have been trained all over again on how to be a follower of Jesus.

May it be so. Amen.

Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque