



ST. FRANCIS

CATHOLIC CHURCH AND SCHOOL

February 11, 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ Jesus,

We embark on a very significant spiritual season of Grace (Lent) to be renewed and rejuvenated in our faith journey. Traditionally it has been very special to us, the faithful followers of Jesus. It is our Lord who sets the tone for us to remain focused on our mission and ministry.

May we take this season to dwell deep intensively into reading and reflecting on the daily messages that (will) come to us through the daily readings, as a family or in small groups! Or, we may choose one book from the Bible, preferably the prophetic books like, Isaiah, Jeremiah or Ezekiel from the Old Testament or one of the Gospels in the New Testament, to be enlightened and energized to serve as pro-active prophets in our own life situations.

Of the three core spiritual exercises that we will be focusing, namely fasting, alms-giving and praying, let us pay special attention to the first one: Fasting. There are creative and meaningful ways of observing this spiritual practice. We will come up with one such way, for each week during this season.

Even though we are struggling during this time of uncertainty, especially to come together and worship, we will have some special Lenten activities to keep up the spirit of the season. One special activity is the Stations of the Cross; we will pray and reflect on Fridays at 7 pm followed by Benediction; which means, confession time will be moved up to 6 pm. We will add one more hour of confession during this season; I will be available from 4 to 5 pm on Sundays, as well. (So, the hours of **confession during Lent will be: Friday: 6 to 7 pm, Saturday and Sunday: 4 to 5 pm**)

Let me take this opportunity to remind ourselves of the 'Sacred Silence' in the church. It is understandable that we are excited to see our friends and parishioners, but we walk into the "Sacred Presence" of our Lord to worship and be nourished by His Word and Food. We pray the Rosary, have a prelude or an opening prayer before Mass to help gather our minds and hearts to the presence of our Lord. Yes, we highly recommend that you arrive early to join the congregation and prepare for the Mass. May we help each other by respecting and observing the sacred silence while walking into the church and worshiping the Lord! We can save the excitement till the end of the Mass and share the joy at the narthex/outside of the church (weather permitting). Hope to get back soon, to have our social hour in the parish hall, with more fun and food.

On a different note: The centennial committee and other councils in the parish are working on the projects to prepare for our celebration in September. As mentioned in the letter that explained the proposed projects, you may prayerfully and generously consider sponsoring them. Please contact the parish office or the centennial committee, if you have any questions.

May the season of Grace bring us God's blessings in abundance!

Fr. Amal